

# **AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE: A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHORT FICTION IN THE AUSTRALIAN LITERARY FIELD**

by  
Steven Holden

B.A. (Honours), M.A., Dip. Ed.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Tasmania

October 1998

*Dept of English &  
Modern European Languages & Literature.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to my wife, Monique Newell for her emotional and personal support over the last three years, and to our son, Jack, who began to demonstrate the radically contingent nature of research by pulling the right material off the book shelves when he was about one year old. I am also indebted to many friends, staff and students in the Centre for English and European Languages and Literatures at the University of Tasmania and to the staff at the Morris Miller Library. I am grateful for the support provided by a Tasmania Research Scholarship. I want to thank Philip Mead for his close reading of successive versions of the manuscript but more especially for his support, advice and enthusiasm for this project over the last three years.

Note: this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis. This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the *Copyright Act 1968*.

**AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE:  
A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHORT  
FICTION IN THE AUSTRALIAN LITERARY FIELD**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
-----------------	-----

**PART ONE**

**BOOKS DO NOT MAKE THEMSELVES:**

**HOW BOOKS GET TO BE AND GET TO BE VALUED AS 'LITERATURE'**

Introduction	8
--------------	---

<b>1</b> Die Hard: the persistence of 'The Author'	12
--	----

<b>2</b> Authorising: the historical construction of 'The Author' in the field of cultural production	52
--	----

<b>3</b> Institutions of the culture industry in the field of cultural production	94
---	----

**PART TWO**

**A GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN SHORT FICTION**

Introduction	136
--------------	-----

<b>4</b> Short Story anthologies and the construction of Australian short fiction	140
---	-----

<b>5</b> 'Beautiful Lies': the establishment of 'Australian women's writing' and 'The Balmain school'	171
--	-----

<b>6</b> Studying writers: will the real literary writer please stand up?	213
---	-----

<b>7</b> The Usual Suspects	247
-----------------------------	-----

Appendix	270
----------	-----

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	273
---------------------	-----

## Abstract

On the face of it, terms like 'the author,' 'the canon,' 'literature' – and its many sub-categories, 'lyrical poetry,' 'Australian short fiction,' and so on – appear simply to describe essential, objective, positive, things. While such terms are certainly descriptive, they have a much more fundamental function, in fact constructing the two main properties that make up cultural activity of a text-based kind: who can be thought of and who counts in cultural production; and what can be thought of what counts as a cultural product.

Questions about who makes and values certain kinds of texts are questions about the nature of the cultural field in which agents and their products compete. They are questions which attempt to dislodge the view that literature can be thought of as a set of cultural products which exhibit special features (literary features) that can be identified by disinterested users of this literature. In order to answer such questions, as I try to do in Part 1, I have cast my net widely across a range of literary, sociological, historical and institutional theories to uncover some of the practices that determine how agents operate in the cultural field, to show how 'the author' and 'the text' are not simple, objective categories to be consumed by 'the reader.' Rather, 'the author,' 'the text' and 'the reader' are the outcomes of contests between various players, embedded for longer or shorter periods in the practices current in the field.

So-called post-structuralist theory and the cultural theory of Michel Foucault, in problematising cultural production, provide a useful starting point for an examination in Chapter 1 of the problem of the author, authority and authorising as social practices. No longer free-standing and neutral, cultural producers and the texts they produce become interested parties in a cultural system. But such a view opens up a new set of problems: to do with the view of a cultural producer or text as a kind of automaton in the system; and to do with the question of the capacity for social agents to effect change in that system. I turn to social theory in order to explain how it is that social agents are more than the ghosts in the machine that post-structuralist theory might suggest, at once able to obey and to



change the prescriptions that pre-exist at any particular cultural moment in which texts are used.

To see why particular kinds of cultural agent and product characterise and endure in the cultural field requires an understanding of the historically constructed and institutional ways in which the field works. Writing and reading books are institutional practices and the agents who have, since the eighteenth century, been credited in western culture with the central place in this cultural production have, as I try to show in Chapter 2, continued to occupy this position by virtue of institutions which foreground writing as a product of the originary genius of the individual, autonomous and copyright-owning author. Authors, that is, are products of historically particular social practices which apply in the field of cultural production. They occupy a social position which has been reasonably durable, my focus in Chapter 3, because the chronically recurring commercial and pedagogical practices embedded in institutional behaviour continue to have a hand in the consecration of the individuals who achieve the name 'author' and in the initial production and subsequent valorising of particular 'literary' texts.

My method in Part 2 is to examine several case studies in order to see how agents and institutions in the cultural field work in more detail. My focus is to show how short story anthologies, critical studies and other key practices construct 'Australian short fiction.' Anthologies are a major institution in the production and reproduction of the sub-field of 'Australian short fiction.' They help to determine what is to count as 'Australian short fiction,' who are to count as writers, editors and critics of 'Australian short fiction' and how 'Australian short fiction' is to be read. Apparently objective cultural landmarks like 'The Bulletin style,' 'Australian women's writing' and 'The Balmain school' – case studies examined in Chapters 4 and 5 – each owe a great deal to short story anthologies.

Anthologies are not, of course, the only institutions that determine the sub-field, as I show in Chapter 6. Reference guides and critical studies function in the same way, determining, for example, what 'fiction' or 'the work of David Malouf' means and how it is to be read. But the personnel who produce, deliver and consume certain kinds of content, the activity that dominates the sub-field of

'Australian short fiction,' are also maintained by means of other institutions, like 'small magazines,' Australia Council grants and 'Writers in Residence' programs, writers' festivals, and so on, my focus in Chapter 7.

In the pages that follow I suggest that there is some kind of bedrock 'reality,' an objective mechanism that constructs the object called 'the cultural field' that my analysis has 'uncovered.' Besides this archaeological trope, a favourite of mine, my 'case studies' also imply a kind of quasi-scientific objectivity. Analytical 'study' stands outside, usually above, the 'cases' which I scrutinise in Part Two. But if I am right, if texts are the products of always contestable and historically contingent social practices, then the same must be true of my own text too: it is as much a case to be studied and, if studied, can be shown to be equally the product of always contestable and contingent social practices. This is not cause for panic, merely for caution. My thesis is not an attempt to get any closer to the truth, only to suggest how we might reorientate ourselves to some texts.

# PART 1

**BOOKS DO NOT MAKE THEMSELVES: HOW  
BOOKS GET TO BE, AND GET TO BE VALUED  
AS 'LITERATURE'**

## Introduction

Let me begin with a story. In March 1995 I was teaching Creative Writing at the University of Tasmania. In our first classes my colleagues suggested we ask our students to judge the literary merit of three short stories, an exercise that had been used, apparently successfully, the previous year. We writers and Creative Writing teachers had no doubt which short story was the best. The judgements made by my students, however, indicated that a variety of interests determined how the stories were read. Most gave top ranking to a story which exhibited some familiar features: a narrative structure that introduced a limited set of characters, images and ideas; an attention to image and rhythm; an ending that signalled closure in the manner of a fable. But others chose a story which explored the relation between two women dominated by a man. In conversation with my colleagues after the classes I was struck by the degree of amazement and frustration they felt that so many students *got it wrong*. What was it, I wondered, that we were doing? What had we hoped would happen? The episode occurred just as I was beginning this thesis, picking at the scabs of the deeply unstable category which we call 'literature,' a category most of us tend to think of as a simple, positive object.

What the short story judging began to help me to see was how every discourse is shaped by the discourses which surround and weave through it. The competition was played out largely between the discourses of the academy – promoting the value of 'literary merit' – and feminism – promoting the value of the representation of women – and the function of the texts themselves was to signal those wider discourses. What impressed me was how deeply embedded those discourses were and how apparently naturally and habitually we were able to make judgements that were driven by them. It was only later that it became clear to me how fundamentally the academic institution – in which, after all, the episode was played out – determined the winning story. There was,

of course, only one. The episode displays the two central features of the making of literature: the politico-institutional, often pedagogical, relation by which literature is constructed, in this case expressed in the authority of the teacher to determine literary values for the student; and the largely unconscious, habituated character of the process, in this case expressed in the automatic, 'natural' but by no means unmediated ease of judging as well as in my colleague's confounded reaction when some students automatically and 'naturally' judged differently.

A description of the way literature is made depends on one of two opposing notions. On the one hand, literature can be thought of as a way of valuing all those cultural products which fill an 'open category' as determined by practices – like reading, studying, writing, publishing, and so on – which are located in time and space and which are contested by social agents – like readers, students, critics, writers, publishers, and so on – who have an interest in determining the products in this category.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, literature can be thought of as a set of cultural products which exhibit special features (literary features) which can be characterised by essential, objective, positive, formal properties which exist immanently in the text as identified by disinterested users of this literature.

Fortunately, the view that literature is an open category of certain products deemed to be 'literature' by those who use them and which are constituted and reconstituted by such use is not novel and can marshal a range of sociological, historical and institutional theories in its support. There are two fundamental arguments that I want to borrow from these theories: first, all social practice, including the making of literature, is produced and reproduced according to inculcated social norms, which agents habitually use or contest; and, secondly, in at least the specific case of literary production, such habituated or contested practices are located over time and politically and institutionally in a field of competing interests. The status of literature as literature depends, of course, on the relationship of readers to texts but also on a wider range of social practices that determine how literature gets to be, in a material sense, but also how literature is prescribed and consecrated, in an evaluative sense. In order to describe this process I attempt to chart

the social, historical and institutional 'rules of the game' which determine who and what counts in the literary field in Australia, in general terms to begin with in the first part of the thesis and then by describing a number of case studies in more detail in the second part.

My argument is that literature is always (and only) characterised by those products and personnel who hold sway in the literary field at any one time. This implies that the literary field is at every moment a field of contestation: over definitions, theories and descriptions (that is, control) of what counts as literature, especially the literary canon; over the practices involved in using (that is, making) literature; over access to the material means of production of literature; and over the relation of the literary field to other fields (where a social agent in the literary field, for example, sells literary labour or capital in the market economy). In theorising and describing such a field this thesis is not a pure and objective analysis. Rather, it is *implicated* in its own academic field in just the way literary books are in the literary field. It is the product of an institutionally circumscribed series of practices – to hypothesise or theorise, to research, to report, to cite and, not least, to argue with originality. The first steps in that series that have led, often contingently, to the production of this thesis have been so submerged that this apparent first step, the introduction, is really some way beyond the notions and practices with which this project actually began. This makes it only a *kind* of introduction, especially given that in the writing or the reading of it the notions it contains may already be familiar, already 'introduced.' As a result, in each time and space in which it is read it will be a different introduction or no introduction at all. In its defence, however, introductions are always and necessarily generically conventional things, conventional ways, that is, of framing the narrative that follows.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is the view of literary theorists like Tony Bennett and John Frow. For Bennett, literature is “a category of discourse ...[which is] a part of the existing constitution and functioning of literary practices, institutions and discourses.” See Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature*. London: Routledge, 1990, 5-6. Frow refers to the “set of practices of signification which have been socially systematised as a unity and which in turn regulate the production, the reception, and the circulation of texts assigned to the category” as ‘the literary formation.’ See Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 84.

# 1

## Die Hard: the persistence of 'The Author'

[I]t would be worth examining how the author became individualised in a culture like ours, what status he has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorisation the author was involved, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of 'the-man-and-his-work criticism' began.

Michel Foucault<sup>1</sup>

It would be worth examining the extent to which Foucault's decentring of the author has restructured textual studies. His famous essay 'What Is An Author?' has made Foucault into something of a patron saint of any analysis which wishes to problematise the formation of literature, and it is no accident that he should be so often quoted. But it is Foucault's 'authorliness,' his authorial presence and continuing authoritative use, that are precisely and ironically at issue both in his essay and its consequences. The field of textual production is, as Foucault argues, governed by particular historically constructed and by no means 'natural' 'author-functions.' By exposing these Foucault wished to demythologise and to challenge the prevailing valorisation of the author as an unproblematic, individual genius/creator. But the career of Foucault and the particular essay 'What Is An Author?' show that those functions die hard. Rather than creating a 'stir of indifference' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' 160) the author-functions that operate within and around Foucault's own essay appear to have been especially



durable and powerful. Given the insistent quotation from Foucault's essay and the spawning of titles on the author-function, were *anyone else* to ask, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' (160) in 'What Is An Author?', the unavoidable answer would be, 'every difference in the world.'<sup>2</sup> And it is precisely this *world*, that is, the power-laden materiality of social action, particularly actions to do with texts, which is the subject of inquiry here.

How are texts embedded in a context which makes them meaningful and, further, at all useable; how does such a context constrain the individuals (or groups) who use (that is, write, read, buy or teach and talk about) texts; and how is it that individuals (and groups) are able to make changes to the ways they use them? Foucault's original project in 'What Is An Author?' was to account for the first question. However much he may, in the later version of 'What Is An Author?', have wished to dismantle the privileging effects of the author-functions he outlines, however he may have wished to contest existing author-functions and politicise the implications of recognising them ('What difference does it make who is speaking?'), the world of political, institutional and conventional textual practices that constrain textual production has remained insistently in place.<sup>3</sup> Despite making them visible, the historically specific institutions of writing, pedagogical and reading practices by which texts are 'inhabited' have remained forceful.

Foucault was, of course, right to foreground the consideration of the historical and political context or 'extra-text' which has so fruitfully problematised literary and cultural studies. Following Foucault's examination of the author-function, texts have become subjects for analysis as particular cases of appropriation (typically concerning what Foucault calls 'literary' texts), cases of kinds of authorial construction (which make 'authors' into psychological subjects reflecting back on the text), and cases in which the author is no longer originary but a circumscribing form of constraint (148-59). Foucault's method has encouraged an examination of the material and social conditions in which texts operate. He is an ideal patron saint for studies such as this one, having established a useful antidote to the 'textual turn' of the post-structuralists.

The 'death of the author' is dependent on making such a textual turn. The textual analytical method of Roland Barthes (at least the early

Barthes) and Jacques Derrida is quite at odds with Foucault's historically and socially located contextual method. By 'bracketing out' the text from its embedding context as Barthes does it is possible to analyse the play of a pure chain of signifiers, but this is as much as simply to bracket the social and material conditions of discourse out of analysis. Language (the play of signifier and signified), because unlocated or dislocated in the post-structuralist method, becomes radically undecidable. It is precisely by relocating it in relation to the social, conventional referents and to the social, material institutions which govern the production of any text or stretch of speech that it becomes possible to see language as a relatively stable thing.

While meaning is in theory potentially indeterminate or polysemous or diffused, in practice people do manage to make meaning because discourse is conventionally and institutionally constrained.<sup>4</sup> When people make meaning by engaging in a discourse that is mediated by the particular institutions of textual production, that is, when they are 'writing' or 'editing' or 'reading' besides publishing, selling, buying, cataloguing books, and so on, they do so because that discourse is equally constrained by the habits that they bring to and recreate by doing it. That is, people know what to do with books because there are reproducing and enduring ways of writing, reading, handling and talking about books. This is because there are durable ways in which institutions like publishing, literary criticism, the pedagogical organisation of 'canonising' text lists, the legitimising of appropriate responses by students, and so on, construct and constrain what it is that we do with books.

In taking up an adversarial position against the post-structuralist view of the indeterminacy of meaning there is a danger. To argue for the material and social conditions that underlie human agency is to argue against the post-structuralist 'bracketing-out' of those material and social conditions and the consequent privileging of the now autonomous text. But at the same time it is only *possible* to see the matrix of material and social conditions which have problematised the hitherto unrecognised processes underlying textual production because of the post-structuralist questioning of 'literature.' In other words, my critique of some elements of post structuralism depends on the post-struct-

turalist undermining of literature as some kind of received category that results simply from the marriage of the true minds of the genius author and the attentive reader.

By denying the natural primacy of 'the author' and 'the author's meaning' the post-structuralists usefully reworked the way we can think about the text as a form of '*activity, a production*.'<sup>5</sup> Yet 'the infinite deferral' of the signified (Barthes, 'From Work to Text,' 76) in this activity weakens the analytical purchase that post-structuralism otherwise offers. By methodologically 'bracketing out' the text from the institutions and conventions which operate in the production and use of texts, the post-structuralist analysis reaches an impasse: it cannot usefully explain how it is that 'literature' actually gets to be produced, that is, it cannot answer the question: how is it that writers of texts actually do (know how to) write? To ask this is, of course, the same as asking: how is it that readers come to read and make shared or communicable understandings derived from a text?<sup>6</sup>

The burden on a theory of the material and social conditions for the production of texts, and specifically of 'literary' texts, is to try to answer these questions which are, fundamentally, to do with the *agency* of individuals, in order to show how writers, readers, critics, and so on are more than 'judgemental dolts' mechanically responding to the social system which they inhabit. My argument, then, is that actors involved in textual production are more than simply reactive to the system.<sup>7</sup>

### LITERARY THEORY

What gains and losses are evident in the post-structuralist method? Roland Barthes repositions the literary critical enterprise as an explication of 'the rules governing the production of meaning.'<sup>8</sup> Jacques Derrida repositions it similarly as the deconstruction or de-sedimentation of meaning, 'tracing ... a path among textual strata in order to stir up and expose forgotten and dormant sediments of meaning which have accumulated and settled into the text's fabric' (Harari, 'Critical Factions/Critical Fictions,' 37). Both projects privilege the text as the autonomous, self-sufficient object of enquiry. Texts become, simply, autonomous stretches of language, in which 'the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance

saying I: language knows a "subject," not a "person," and *this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language "hold together."*<sup>9</sup> Language, now apparently self-sufficient, constructs itself (Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' 146). This autonomy comprises a rejection of the valorising context in which the text is located and of the appeal to the authority of the author in questions of interpretation. (The concentration on the text itself, or the word on the page is not, of course, a necessarily radical step, given that a similar reading strategy was practised by critics of the Leavisite or Practical or New Criticism schools.<sup>10</sup>)

The move that is characteristic of much of Barthes's theory is the attempt to isolate the text from the material and social conditions in which he finds it. This isolating is the point of the prescriptive urgency in his essay, 'From Work To Text'. In this essay, *if* 'the work is concrete, occupying a portion of book-space (in a library, for example); [while] the Text ... is a methodological field' (Barthes, 'From Work To Text,' 74), texts can be analysed according to a new strategic methodology which need not recognise the constructed and constraining functions of the context in which the text hitherto was seen to exist. Barthes is at pains in this essay to labour the binary distinction between text and work in order to validate his claim to treat the text in isolation. '[T]he work can be seen in bookstores, in card catalogues, and on course lists, while the text reveals *itself*, articulates *itself* according to or against certain rules. While the work is held in the hand, the text is held in language: it exists only as discourse' (75, emphasis added). The distinction involves an interesting relation. The work is here subject to the institutions that determine *value*, while the text is independent of such determinations. This dislocating of value, especially in distinguishing 'high' and 'low' fiction, was, of course, a principal objective in Barthes's strategy. But the important effect is to isolate the text from the institutions and conventions (for example, bookstores, card catalogues, course lists) that define the way the text is produced and taken up.

If the distinction between the work and the text holds good, the text can be said somehow autonomously to reveal and articulate *itself*. But how the text does this remains, in 'From Work To Text,' problematic, especially when texts reveal and articulate themselves

'intertextually' (77), according to the 'collaborative' 'play' of readers reading (79-80). Even so, proposing the autonomy of the text provides Barthes with significant analytical purchase, allowing him to apprehend and account for an indeterminate diffusion of meanings because the text is independent of the sorts of conventional and institutional practices which now, for Barthes, only construct and constrain what we do with *works*. The 'dilatatory ... plurality of meaning' (76) Barthes is able to claim depends on the fact that the text 'cannot be apprehended as part of a hierarchy or even a simple division of genres' (75). By locating the text in discourse, as a kind of pure, unconstrained language, Barthes attempts to minimise the problematic of value: all texts become equal discourses which work in similar ways, according to similar observable structures.<sup>11</sup> Yet such a dislocation also has another consequence: it prevents Barthes from being able to explain how an autonomous language or discourse which is independent of socially located canonising hierarchies or the conventions of genres can establish rules for interpretation. Even so, Barthes's distinction between work and text enables the fruitful corrective to a reductive criticism of the-man-and-his-works or 'the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction ... [as] the *author* "confiding" in us' (Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' 143) in which literature is simply reified as 'that which is the subject of criticism,' and the meaning of the work as 'that which is discovered by criticism.'

Given the difficulties that underlie Barthes's case, it might be useful to consider the political strategies that organise his distinction between work and text. Barthes's strategic claims for the 'orphan text' (Barthes, 'From Work to Text,' 78) and the 'infinite deferral' of meaning (Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' 147) can be understood in terms of the political situation underpinning his position, that is, in terms of the need to challenge orthodox literary models. This informs the polemical nature of the claim he makes to represent the vanguard in literary theory.<sup>12</sup> Barthes refuses the relevance of contextual considerations in order to distance himself from previous theories which do in some way account for the context of the text and he does this in order to stake a claim to theoretical innovation. This is the particular strategy he brings to the consideration of the authorless text, where the real target is Criticism '[which] is today undermined along with the Author' (147)

and to the distinction between work and text, but it is an endemic strategy, useful in maintaining the distinctiveness of structuralist and post-structuralist theory (and, of course, of any new theory, including the theory developed here).

The strategy can be seen in play in the early essay, 'Authors and Writers'<sup>13</sup> where Barthes uses it to organise a similar work/text-like distinction for authors/writers: '[t]he author participates in the priest's role, the writer in the clerk's; the author's language is an intransitive *act* (hence, in a sense, a gesture), the writer's an *activity*' (Barthes, 'Authors and Writers,' 190, emphasis added). Works and authors are social *products* while texts and writers are linguistic *processes*. What is the source of such binary distinctions? For one thing, Barthes's methodology originates out of a linguistic model of social action (the familiar Saussurian pedigree for structuralist theory as a whole) which encourages the use of explanatory language metaphors: 'language, that model institution'(191) 'can provide the initial terms and principles ..., [so] it seems reasonable to elect linguistics as a basic model for the structural analysis of narrative' (Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives,' 259). For another, his theory is the beginning of a development from and reaction against the structuralist emphasis on the fixed rules of *langue*. The effect is to transpose the *langue/parole* distinction in Saussure's linguistic model onto the work/text or author/writer, in order to claim the limitless possibilities of process – the fluidity of *parole*, text, writing process – as the proper focus of analysis.

Barthes's move enables him to claim a field of interest and various theoretical models at the same time and in opposition to alternative reductive or positive kinds of literary criticism. But the significance of 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' lies in the transitional moment in which it was written. Barthes is, here, in transit between structuralism and post-structuralism. Annette Lavers sees 1959-60 as the turning point in Barthes's career, the period where he turns from 'textualism' to 'contextualism,' or at least towards a theory that can account for the life-cycle of the literary work.<sup>14</sup> The essay is that moment in which Barthes jumps from a structuralist to a post-structuralist account, where he describes *reading*, (the processes that construct meaning by engagement

with a text – Roland Barthes reading *Goldfinger*), as though *describing observable and classifiable units in the text*. Given the linguistic model that organises his thinking, where the text has the status of *either langue or parole*, Barthes is unable to conceive of the making of meaning in a text as *simultaneously* constrained (by conventional practices of using texts) and diffused (by particular, idiosyncratic practices). In the nature of a still structuralist analysis, Barthes's own multiplying reading practices are reified as diffusing units *in the text*. Having bracketed out the text from its context, that is, having consigned the constrained work to the oblivion of a socially structured kind of *langue*, Barthes is left with the inescapable conclusion that the text can offer only diffused and finally indeterminate meanings without being able to explain how it is that social agents frequently do similar sorts of things with texts. Or almost.

At the end of 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' Barthes imports into textual analysis the sort of context he quarantines out in 'From Work to Text.' 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' ends, interestingly, with a contextual account of narrative: 'every narrative is dependent on a "narrative situation," the set of protocols according to which the narrative is "consumed"' (287). Given such a narrative situation, 'however familiar, however casual may today be the act of opening a novel or a newspaper or of turning on the television, nothing can prevent that humble act from installing in us, all at once and in its entirety, the narrative code we are going to need' (287-88). To claim that a 'narrative situation' as 'the set of protocols' triggers 'the narrative code we are going to need' is as much as to claim that the text operates within the kind of constraining and constructing context which elsewhere Barthes discounts. The contextualist analysis which explains why agents do similar sorts of things with texts is coming in the back door.

Why does Barthes return to a social theory that he would otherwise wish to reject? The analytical purchase derived from seeing the text as the site of infinite possible meanings does enable Barthes to account for the way enduring texts (say, Shakespeare's plays and sonnets) can meaningfully be appropriated by people across space and time. That is, Barthes provides a workable account of the transposability of texts.

But in order to show why this transposing has not actually led to the disintegration of the text (to infinitely diffused and incomparable/incommunicable Shakespeares) he needs to step outside the linguistic model, to the 'protocols' and 'codes' of social theory. In order to disguise this sociological turn, in a move typical of the structuralists, rather than acknowledging the linguistic in the social he imports the whole of social action into linguistics.<sup>15</sup> The theory that Barthes outlines in 'The Death of the Author' is a theory of intertextual relations. The field occupied by those (readers and writers) who engage with texts 'has no origin than language itself' (Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' p. 146) and the reader is also a text, 'without history, biography, psychology; ... simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted' (148). Given that the grounds for textual practice are only textual, readers somehow realise themselves ('hold together the traces') in reading *without* having any extra-textual history, biography, psychology. They are merely textual moments which, somehow, are able to resist the radical unintelligibility that is consequent on occupying only 'that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away' (142). In such a theory, where the practices described are also the only constituting grounds of those practices, readers somehow pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, so to speak, to a position in which intelligibility is possible.

There are, clearly, problems with Barthes's account of textuality. But there are gains to be made from a post-structuralist reading of the text as a process of discovering or uncovering its 'infinite' 'irreducible' meanings. Such a view of textual production (I mean the production of the text as a meaningful thing, producing it by writing or reading it or by reviewing it, cataloguing it, and so on, in particular ways) emphasises the particular strategic practices that make a text. It stresses that a text is not fixed or given but must be 'made to go,' in Barthes's terms (Barthes, 'From Work to Text,' 80),<sup>16</sup> or be reproduced by the deconstructing or de-sedimenting of those 'repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted ... belatedly,' that is, after the fact or in the fact of reading, in Derrida's terms.<sup>17</sup> Meaning, in this view, is constructed in the process of using the text and can change over time. What is to be gained from this



is a way of explaining how texts are 'made to go,' how they are (re)produced according to particular institutional and conventional constraints in common ways for different users, and how coherent and dynamic social and material conditions construct changing meanings over time and space. What is, most significantly, lost in Barthes's account is the function of the agent in the process of textual production. For Barthes, just where the text is open and where it is closed to playful reading, that is, just where the text encourages active manipulation and elsewhere merely passive consumption, is uncertain. Lacking any social theory of action, it remains unclear how much agency the reader actually has. Further, it remains unclear how much agency the writer has and, a closely connected problem, how the writer is able to effect change in the ways texts are produced. In other words, given only the bracketed text, Barthes does not, and cannot, explain how writers can opt to produce the possibilities for more open and more closed readings. Indeed, so far as the writer is concerned, the only freedom available occurs, according to Barthes, during the instant of choice between the otherwise coercive possibilities in language.<sup>18</sup>

A few words are in order here regarding my method in dealing with Barthes's theory. I am, according to his own method, critiquing his theory as a text. But why a critique of Barthes? If, as I have argued, his position is limited by certain academically circumscribed possibilities then so is mine. In dealing with the material and social conditions which underpin textual production, in dealing with questions of writing and reading, I am bound to a relation to post-structuralism of one kind or another. This is because anybody dealing with literary theory is bound by a relation of synthesis with and antithesis to previous theoretical positions. My method is not, however, quite respectful. My dealing with Barthes is, as he would put it, 'not a peaceful operation' (Barthes, 'From Work to Text,' 73). Where he brackets out the social and material conditions which underlie textual production, my oppositional move is necessarily to bracket them in. But the options which are available to me are strictly limited. I can accept Barthes's method, revise it or refuse it but cannot ignore it. The same was true for Barthes. Barthes's method can be traced back to Husserl's attempt to get at the deep structures of

the mind by means of his essentialising 'phenomenological reduction,' the 'bracketing out' of unwanted intrusions into a theory of immediate intuition or abstract consciousness. This trace illustrates how, for Barthes and for Heidegger before him, the same options of accepting, revising or refusing, in this case accepting, revising or refusing Husserl's method, are necessarily brought into play. Those intrusions that Husserl brackets out Heidegger just brackets back in. He does so not only because it easily wins the argument but because there is little else he can do.

The bracketing out is so fundamental a step that any following step must account for it in one way or another. And the same pattern can be observed in the phenomenologically influenced bracketing method of the Russian Formalists and the consequent historicist reaction.<sup>19</sup> So when Barthes uses the same bracketing method the rules of the game have been played out already. By bracketing back in all that practical, historically accountable social activity that underlies the uses of texts I am quite simply undercutting Barthes's position and demonstrating my own. By bracketing out the world of works from his own activity in theorising, Barthes may pretend that his own practice and reception is outside of the world of works. But by bracketing that world back in to the analysis it is possible to see both how Barthes, or any other writer, produces a theory within circumscribed possibilities that result from the specific social and material conditions in which the writing occurs and is received and dealt with in future, and equally how my theory is bound to those very same conditions. The fact that my argument here is so circumscribed is, of course, an advantage for my argument, because I am claiming that the context in which I operate is central to the very argument I am able to make or even think. It is equally a disadvantage for Barthes's argument because he is claiming that the text (for example, his essay 'From Work to Text') 'articulates itself.'

The methodology of Michel Foucault aims precisely to uncover and account for those social and material conditions which underpin all institutional and conventional practices, including those institutional and conventional practices that surround and pervade the text. The 'author-

functions' that Foucault describes, that is, those institutions and conventions that circumscribe the use of all texts, explain how and why it is that textual meanings tend not to proliferate infinitely, even though any text has the potential to do so.

In 'What Is An Author?' Foucault articulates a new model for understanding the functions of the institution of the author or, in the version of the essay in Josué Harari's edition, 'author functions.' Rather than being the individual source who 'naturally' produces a text, 'the author' is considered problematically, as the set of prescriptive practices that constrain the way in which a text is understood and used. This set of practices is usually, in Western cultures, assigned to particular physical individuals called 'authors.' According to Foucault, '[t]he author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and culture' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Harari, 147), or, to use the earlier version of the same essay, 'the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Bouchard, 124), which are, typically, 'literary' texts.<sup>20</sup> The author is, therefore, not a cause but a product of discourse, that is, a 'characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within society' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Harari, 148), or, to use the earlier version again, 'the function of an author is to characterise the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Bouchard, 124). Texts exist, circulate and operate in constrained ways which are, so far as Foucault is concerned in 'What Is An Author?', a result of the policing powers of the institution of the author. Such functions include the power to appropriate certain discourses as objects which can then be protected, to the advantage of those who hold the 'ownership rights' (literally, the copyright) to the discourse-as-object, or censored, to the disadvantage of those who hold 'ownership rights' (because to censor a book is to censor its writer(s)). The institution of the author, further, provides greater protection to some texts than to others. Foucault explains how 'literary' texts were, until the late seventeenth century, circulated freely, without necessary reference to the author's name, while 'scientific' texts depended on the authority of their authors. This position, Foucault

claims, reverses towards the end of the seventeenth century so that: '[w]e now ask of each poetic or fictional text: from where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design?' (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Harari, 149).<sup>21</sup>

All of these, at first sight, natural questions are highly problematic, as Foucault notes. They establish the grounds on which a text can be dealt with as literary in the first place. They are also, necessarily, retrospective constructions, salvaging authorless texts from the wilderness of collaboration (for example, 'Homer') or non-ascription (for example, 'William Langland'). And they conceal the institutional nature of authoring (a third aspect of the use of the author) by suggesting a 'realistic status' for the author as a 'psychological projection' of his or her texts. The critical apparatus that makes as its subject the man-and-his-works (where the works unproblematically are taken to reflect the man) is the specific target here.

Critics ... try to give this intelligible being a realistic status, by discerning, in the individual, a 'deep' motive, a 'creative' power, or a 'design,' the milieu in which writing originates. Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual which we designate as making him an author are only a projection, in more or less psychologising terms, of the operations that we force texts to undergo, the connections that we make, the traits that we establish as pertinent, the continuities that we recognise, or the exclusions that we practice. (150)

Such reconstructions of the author are, for Foucault, merely one aspect of the author-authority in the text. Further embedded 'in' the text are 'a certain number of signs referring to the author ... personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and verb conjugation' which, to the extent that they do not refer to the real speaker, signal a 'plurality of self' (152) which is typical of texts with author-functions.<sup>22</sup>

There is a problem with Foucault's argument here, in that such signs as personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place and verb conjugations are equally evident in other texts or stretches of discourse in which the author-function is *not* present, in letters, diaries, corporate reports, joke telling, and so on, and such signs have the capacity to refer specifically to the present writer or speaker or to equally plural selves.

That is, Foucault has no good grounds on which to claim that the plurality of self in recognisably authored and institutionally consecrated texts is specific only to those texts. All texts are always capable of carrying a plurality of selves, depending on the way the text is taken up. To argue against Foucault here is, however, only to argue against his residual inclination to mark the 'literary' text as somehow distinct in its internal features from other types of text. This does not restrict the application of his argument to an examination of the social and material conditions for the production of 'literature.' In fact, quite the reverse is true. The fact that 'literary' texts are not in any way 'internally' different from other types of text, that is, the fact that they work in the same sorts of ways as other texts, suggests that 'literature' is simply what is constructed by the 'literary' context: it is 'what gets taught.'<sup>23</sup> This means that distinctions between genres and styles are not internal to the text but external, the product of descriptions and ascriptions and pedagogical prescriptions.<sup>24</sup>

However much it is possible to quibble over the extent to which the text is dependent on institutional and conventional markers, what remains useful in Foucault's account of the author-function is his repositioning of the argument. After 'What Is An Author?' it is (or should be) no longer possible for a literary critic or theorist to consider the author in an unproblematic way. Foucault prises open the terms of debate to make it possible to consider the relation of the subject (the writer, reader, critic, student) to the text. It reverses the way we consider the production of the text so that the author becomes one functional (rather than the original) variable in the production of the text as a socially useable artefact. It denies the privileged protection and constraining of the text associated with the author whose function is, in Western cultures at least, to 'impede ... the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction' (159).

To demonstrate this, let me consider the construction and continuing reconstruction of Shakespeare as a cultural commodity. Shakespeare provides an especially neat example of Foucault's argument, and the neatness is not by accident. Foucault's repositioning of the way Shakespeare can be dealt with is a major aim in 'What Is An

Author?' (146) and the stimulus to much current Shakespeare research.<sup>25</sup> What we mean by 'Shakespeare' is constructed by the institutional ways of dealing with 'Shakespearean texts,' 'the Shakespeare canon,' 'Shakespeare in production,' 'Shakespeare scholarship.' All of these institutions are problematic. What 'counts' as a Shakespeare text varies according to the editorial emphasis placed on assessments of 'historical accuracy' or 'corruption' (following the Folio or Quartos or bits of both), the use of 'historical' or modern spelling, the degree of (in)attention to aspects of performance, and so on. What 'counts' in the canon is similarly dependent on particular cultural concerns to do with, for example, the value of autonomous and collaborative authorship. And 'who' Shakespeare is thought to be depends on the cultural climate which emphasises academic learning (the small Latin and less Greek), performance (Shakespeare as a playwright), poetry (the Shakespeare of the sonnets), and so on. All of these institutions construct what we mean when we speak or write about Shakespeare, so much so that the academic industry which uses 'Shakespeare' as grist for its mill has now become its own subject, examining the grounds on which the industry itself is founded.

The field of analysis has widened mightily since Foucault wrote his ground-breaking essay. As he points out, the constraints on and the constraining power and authority of Shakespeare depends on the verification of 'Shakespeare' texts:

if we proved that Shakespeare did not write [the] sonnets which pass for his, that would constitute a significant change and affect the manner in which the author's name functions. If we proved that Shakespeare wrote Bacon's *Organon* by showing that the same author wrote both the works of Bacon and Shakespeare, that would be [another] type of change which would entirely modify the functioning of the author's name. (146)

More recent discussion takes Foucault's method a step further, so that what is meant by 'Shakespeare' depends on the way the poems and plays are edited and taught and on the way the plays are produced, so that, following the Berliner Ensemble's 1986 production of *Troilus and Cressida*, for example, '[a] story that has always been understood as a

misogynist parable of female infidelity is now seen as a misanthropist parable of male betrayal and brutality.<sup>26</sup> And even that 'always' becomes problematic. I know only that Shakespeare *may* have conceived of the play from a misogynist perspective, seeing Cressida in a certain way (which I can only guess at, not inhabiting the cultural milieu available to him), and that contemporary productions make different readings of Shakespeare 'thinkable,' and so, for example, can reconstruct Shakespeare from a feminist perspective.

Foucault's work on the 'author-function' has, for obvious reasons, become central in literary theoretical debate. His problematising of the author is both an inescapable fact and the source of fruitful possibilities in literary studies and is now embedded in the institutional practices (the analytical methods, text lists, course structures) of academic institutions. But his questioning of the authoring and authority of a text is just one aspect of a wider examination of the various constraints on discourse. In dealing with discourse, Foucault argues, 'its appearance and its regularity, ... we should look for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to the chance series of these events and fixes its limits.'<sup>27</sup> Those external conditions include explicit prohibitions against, for example, the recognition of discourses by those who are insane or untruthful; constraining institutions such as secondary commentary, the personalising psychological projections of authorship and the depersonalising tools of disciplines which govern the textual possibilities of discourses; and the constraining effects of rituals and discourse communities or fellowships which govern the broadly social uses of discourses (Foucault, 'Orders of Discourse,' 7-30). The author as an institution of constraint here is merely one institution among many. Why did the question of the author come to occupy the place it does in Foucault's essay, 'What Is An Author?' and why has this essay and its problematised author so overwhelmed literary theory?

In 'What Is An Author?' Foucault is, firstly, engaged in a debate, or several debates, as Kevin Brophy points out in his analysis of the essay, most obviously with the school of 'the-man-and-his-work criticism' that is discounted at the beginning of the essay, but also with the Barthesian strategy of disposing of the concept of the author:

it is not enough to declare that we should do without the writer (the author) and study the work in itself. The word 'work' and the unity that it designates are probably as problematic as the status of the author's individuality.<sup>28</sup> (Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Harari, 144)

While Barthes foregrounds the particular institution of the author, his method of dealing with it is inadequate: it is insufficient simply to legislate the problem of the author out of analysis. And because this is what Barthes attempts to do Foucault is bound in the academically circumscribed possibilities in which the debate about discourse takes place to deal with the problem. In beginning his discussion by appealing to an almost exhaustive area of possible research ('how the author became individualised in a culture like ours, what status he has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorisation the author was involved, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of "the-man-and-his-work criticism" began' (141)), Foucault establishes an alternative methodological field to the bracketed-out textualism of Barthes, and, to extend Barthes's orphan metaphor, 'fathers' a new inter-disciplinary field of research.

The very fact that research into the material and social conditions for textual production is seen to be or claimed to have been stimulated by the particular essay 'What Is An Author?' has important consequences for the place of the constraining institution of the author.<sup>29</sup> From being one institution among many in 'Orders of Discourse' it becomes central and originary in 'What Is An Author?' The irony in this is that the author (Foucault) and the text ('What Is An Author?') become central and originary even in the act of disputing the centrality and originating power of the author in his text. Even though 'the author ... is not in fact the cause, origin, or starting-point of the phenomenon of the written or spoken articulation of a [text] ... [but only] a particular, vacant place that may in fact be filled by different individuals,'<sup>30</sup> Foucault's authority and text are the cause, origin, starting point for a way of thinking because the place in the text has not, in fact, been filled by different individuals but by 'Foucault' in a way that is policed by the sorts of author functions I have considered above.



The text 'What Is An Author?' may, of course, escape its author in many ways, including the one that has been illustrated above, where the two versions of the essay are in a relation of mutation, the earlier version nominalising the personal 'functions of the author,' where the author is a concrete noun, the later version systematising the 'author function' as an abstract noun. Foucault, similarly, slips between the earlier version that ends with 'the teasing, philosophical, open-ended "We can easily imagine [a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author]"' and the later 'political, prophetic and anti-bourgeois call for a revolution of sorts in fiction production' (Brophy, *Creativity*, 20). In examining the ambiguities of this mutation, where the status of the various possible versions of the essay – revisions, translations, rewritings – remains unclear, Kevin Brophy argues that 'the hold of the author on the text here becomes tenuous and seem to slip' (20). But the policing of the texts remains formidable. In terms of the conventions of publishing, the two versions are merely copies of Foucault's and nobody else's original copyright text! Evidence of editorial input is suppressed (21). And in terms of the constraints of academic citation, to step beyond the text, few people refer to Harari's or Bouchard's essays. As Brophy points out, in the case of a third redaction in the Harari version of the essay reprinted in Paul Rabinow's *The Foucault Reader*, 'a photograph of Foucault's shaved head looks straight out at the reader as if the man is about to speak' (21). 'What Is An Author?' belongs to Foucault.

The way Foucault's own text is read and taken up indicates the power of the author as an institutional constraint: simultaneously, the essay attacks and constrains the attack on the authority of 'the author' and its own author. With astonishing neatness, the mild neutrality of Foucault's interest in the constraints on discourse is played out in the struggle and contradiction between what the text ostensibly *says* (which is that author functions are questionable historical, artificial constraints that may be broached) and what it actually *does* (which is, in practice each time the theory is taken up, to reinforce the constraints on authority which it seeks to question). The history of the deployment of Foucault's essay would reveal how every discourse operates as the locus of political struggle and ideological contention. But the fact that

Foucault and his texts cannot (or cannot yet) escape the power of the institutional constraints on discourse is, paradoxically, proof of his position. It shows that language is political, used always within a practical social context, in Foucault's case the context of the academic hierarchy, to dispute over, seize or protect material goods, kinds of privilege or prestige. If we always use discourse in general in this way we do not do so consciously. We locate ourselves unproblematically in 'the natural order of things' so that practices like writing or reading particular books in particular ways, knowing which particular books to buy, and so on, appear not to be political practices at all. How it is that we operate in such an unproblematic way, failing to see the politics of our practices will be considered at the end of Chapter Three. For the moment there is a more pressing problem to face.

At the end of 'What Is An Author?' Foucault substitutes the term 'subject' for the now problematic term 'author.' In doing so he enables us to deal with the problem of the author, authority and authorising as social practices. But he also opens up a new set of problems to do with the subject, namely: the relation of the subject as a kind of *effect* of the causal system in which he or she operates; and the question of the capacity for subjects to effect *change* in that system. To frame such problems in terms of the relation of subject to text is to ask: how is it that subjects 'know' what to write or read, which way or ways to write or read, or what books to buy in the first place? These are, to use the terminology of Foucault, questions of the relation of dependency in the 'insertion' of the 'subject' in a 'system of dependencies' (158), or, to use the more analytically fruitful terminology of social theorists, questions to do with the *praxis* of social *agents*. In order to see how books get to be, that is, how people do know how to and what to read or write or do with books I shall turn to social theories of action.

### **SOCIAL THEORY**

When an individual sits down to write or read, his or her actions and expectations are already constructed, institutionally defined by previous practice and, often, by pedagogical routines. So, any

author who sits down to write a text, at the edge of which lurks a possible *oeuvre*, resumes the function of the author.

What he writes and does not write, what he sketches out, even in preliminary sketches for the work, and what he drops as simple mundane remarks, all this *interplay* of differences is *prescribed* by the author-function. It is from his new position, as an author, that he will fashion – from all he might have said, from all he says daily, at any time – the still shaky profile of his *oeuvre*. (Foucault, 'Orders of Discourse,' 14-15, emphasis added)

Foucault's description provides considerable purchase on the interplay of the 'internalised' and the 'actual' practice of writing. When the author sits down to write, there exists a set of usually abstract expectations and concrete practices. But, again, the account presents as many problems as it attempts to explain. The *oeuvre* that lurks at the edge of the text is, simultaneously, imagined (the author's projected *oeuvre* at the completion of his or her career), actual (in the works of the author that may already exist for purposes of comparison) and retrospective (in the critical reception of the work over time). That is, for Foucault, the *oeuvre* which in some way influences the text exists 'in' the author (as an imaginary thing) and 'outside' of the author (in the material and critically reconstructed existence of the set of works). The unresolved tension in Foucault's model of the author-writing-the-work can be seen in the ambiguity of the *prescribed interplay* of differences. Where 'interplay' suggests some freedom for the writer, 'prescribing,' in which the scripting is constrained by some kind of pre-scripting, does not. Nor does it explain the degree of the relation of dependence of the writer to that prescribed set of author-functions.

Several social theorists have wrestled with the sort of problem that remains unresolved in Foucault's account, that is, with the problem of the freedom and constraints within which human actors possess agency. Social theory may be of some use in attempting to explain why it is that social actors engage in practices (like using books) that are regular, regulated and enduring but that are also open to the possibility of individual creativity. Social theory, that is, may help to explain why it is that social actors are able to use (write, read, buy, talk about) books in *both received and new ways*. Pierre Bourdieu, most promisingly, has been enthusiastically harnessed in the pursuit of an explanation of the

social practice of such cultural production as writing 'literature.' Bourdieu's attraction lies not least in his account of cultural capital and the related concept of the field of cultural production and in the fact that his position on cultural production is deliberately opposed to the emphasis on structures that is typical of structuralism. But his interest for social theorists lies mainly in his account of *habitus*. *Habitus*, according to Bourdieu refers: to those

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organising action of a conductor;<sup>31</sup>

or to

an acquired system of generative schemes ... [which make] possible the free production of ... the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of ... production ... [but] not along the lines of a mechanical determinism; (Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 99)

or to

the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations ... [that is, to] a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to the analogical transfer of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems;<sup>32</sup>

or to that concept which satisfies the 'theoretical intention ... to get out from under the philosophy of consciousness without doing away with the agent, in its truth of a practical operator of object constructions;<sup>33</sup> or, finally, to a habituated 'second nature' or 'feel for the game' which

gives its possessors a 'nose' or 'feeling', without any need for cynical calculation, for 'what needs to be done,' where to do it, how and with whom, in view of all that has been done and is being done, all those who are doing it, and where (Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 95; see also 234).

Bourdieu's care in defining *habitus* is well justified because in articulating the concept of *habitus* he intends to resolve one of the major preoccupations of sociology, the problem of agency itself. The critical pressure on his definitions, the fact that they will be and have been prised apart to see how they might work (or, more to the point, might be broken), forces Bourdieu to assimilate the problems of social theory into the definition itself. So the negative conditions which the concept is supposed to resolve ('without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them,' 'without being in any way the product of obedience to rules,' 'without being the product of the organising action of a conductor,' 'not along the lines of a mechanical determinism' and 'without doing away with the agent') and the positive conditions which the concept is supposed to enable ('making possible the free production of thoughts, perceptions and actions,' 'enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations' and 'infinitely diversified tasks') are explicitly written in. The problem for Bourdieu is to account for the gap between the previous, pre-given and predetermining positions (and the dispositions that come with them) which agents inherit and the current dispositions which agents use to act in ways which are variable or free. The point of his account of *habitus* is to attempt to wrestle the agent free from his or her determining background, allowing the possibility of novel action. In this account the agent becomes central because his or her capacity to think, feel, act, and so on, is not seen to be systematic but incorporated, that is, literally *embodied* in his or her habitual yet adaptable dispositions (broadly, his or her socially and culturally normative knowledge, attitudes, expectations, including mannerisms, posture, dress sense, accent, and so on). As Bourdieu claims, 'via *habitus*, practical sense and strategy, what is reintroduced [into social theory] is agent, action, practice.'<sup>34</sup> The account of *habitus* as that space between the social system and the individual practice of agents, that bodily incorpora-

tion of a seemingly intuitive 'feel for the game' appears to offer considerable promise in explaining how it is that writers inherit a socially and culturally normative knowledge *and* actually deploy it in new ways.<sup>35</sup>

Every version of Bourdieu's account of *habitus* (as can be seen in the definitions above) is particularly sensitive to the problem of determinism and seeks to avoid it in a rhetorical way. So the *habitus* is always emphatically asserted to be improvisatory, strategic, orienting, generative in order to avoid its being considered to be the mere mechanical interface between previous predetermined systems and current ones.<sup>36</sup> Such rhetorical insistence is, at first glance, persuasive but in fact masks a weakness in the concept. This is not to say that *habitus* is not useful. For my purposes it makes the agent *central* in the account of cultural (re)production but it does not account for agency in terms of the capacity for novelty. The strategic point of Bourdieu's position on rules and strategies is precisely to come to grips with this difficulty. As he acknowledges: '[t]he notion of strategy is the instrument I use to break away from the objectivist point of view and from the action without an agent that structuralism presupposes' (Bourdieu, 'From Rules to Strategies,' 62). Strategy is, in Bourdieu's definition, 'the practical sense as the feel for the game ... acquired in childhood, by taking part in social activities, especially ... in children's games' (62-63). Now, leaving aside the fact that this is an unusual, non-rational definition of 'strategy,' Bourdieu's conclusion is false. He argues that the 'good player,' because he or she possesses such a 'feel for the game,' 'does at every moment what the game requires' (63), and doing what the game requires 'presupposes a permanent *capacity for invention* ... to *adapt* to indefinitely varied and never completely identical situations' (63, emphasis added). In other words, strategies have become habitual *and* adaptable at the same time. If that is the case then Bourdieu has a powerful tool indeed to account for the possibility that agents inherit social and cultural knowledge and are able to deploy it in new ways. But is that the case? Why does 'doing at every moment what the game requires' 'presuppose a permanent capacity for invention?' Given a simple game, say, noughts and crosses, the possible moves are preordained. Learning the winning moves might be the result of an extremely temporary moment of adaptation and knowing how to win is dependent

on knowing those moves. But most games are not so simple and, as a result, most games do allow for some degree of invention; the more complex the moves in the game, the greater the possibility for inventiveness. But the variability that Bourdieu is locating in the strategies of agents is false. Variability is more properly a product of *complexity in the system* (the number of moves the game allows) than a product of the *agent's strategies* (the ability to generate a number of moves).

In an excellent essay on rules and strategies, Charles Taylor explicitly invokes Bourdieu's account of strategies. Taylor's 'To Follow a Rule ...' explains how it is that we understand how to follow a rule without having to know all of the (possibly infinite) instances of the rule. We can understand and misunderstand rules, he argues, following Wittgenstein's game theory, because '[u]nderstanding is always against a background of what is taken for granted, just relied on.'<sup>37</sup> That is, following a rule, regardless of the fact that we can articulate the rule if need be, is fundamentally a *practice*.

For instance, when I stand respectfully and defer to you, I may not have the word 'deference' in my vocabulary. Very often, words are coined by (more sophisticated) others to describe important features of people's stance in the world. ... This understanding is not, or is only imperfectly, captured in our representations. *It is carried in patterns of appropriate action*: that is, action which conforms to a sense of what is fitting and right. An agent with this kind of understanding recognises when he or she or others 'have put a foot wrong.' His or her actions are *responsive* throughout to this sense of rightness, but the 'norms' may be quite unformulated, or formulated only in fragmentary fashion (Taylor, 'To Follow a Rule ...' 51, emphasis added).

This kind of understanding is, Taylor believes, what Bourdieu means by *habitus* (51). But Taylor's account, quite rightly, shifts the emphasis onto 'background' not inventiveness, understanding being 'responsive' to rather than 'generative' of 'patterns of appropriate action.' The practice of agents becomes the product not the cause of the social system. Taylor's essay provides Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* with some precision but does so at the expense of Bourdieu's claim that *habitus* is that

dynamic link between system and agent. Agents understand the rule, in Taylor's account, because they embody the system in their background knowledge. This does, of course, sit comfortably with Bourdieu's account of *habitus* as the embodied 'feel for the game' but it negates the claim that *habitus* is generative or inventive. Rather than explaining the capacity of agents to effect mutation, what this modified concept of *habitus* now gives us is an account of the way that agents are able to negotiate their way through a hugely complex social system.

In attempting to explain the possibility for change in what now appears to be an extremely deterministic model of social action, Bourdieu and others who use the concept of *habitus* tend to introduce system complexity into that model. Scott Lash, for example, accounts for the possibility for change in Bourdieu's social model by explaining 'transposability' (the capacity by agents to transfer practices acquired in one field to another which is, in Bourdieu's account, a property of the *habitus* itself) as the result of the interplay of differing *areas or fields of the social structure*, for example, the economic and cultural field (Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 162). This model does not rehabilitate the possibility for inventiveness by agents but does explain that the massive number of possibilities for interaction (however deterministic) will lead to some kind of permutation within the social structure. Similarly, John Thompson blurs the causal relation of *habitus* to practice so that practice, rather than resulting from the dispositions of the *habitus*, results from "the *relation between the habitus*, on the one hand, and the specific social contexts or "fields" within which individuals act, on the other' (Thompson, 'Introduction [to *Language and Symbolic Power*],' 14). As in the model proposed by Lash, characteristics of the system are used to account for multiplicity and permutation.

Bourdieu's emphasis on properties of the system is, itself, a kind of residual structuralism. It is evident, for example, in his rejection of the problem of the agency of the writer. The question, he argues, is 'not how a writer comes to be what he is, in a sort of genetic psycho-sociology, but rather how the position or "post" he occupies – that of a writer of a particular type – became constituted' (Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 162). Now, to account for the construction of the various



'posts' which the writer occupies is essential in explaining how various kinds of writers in general and 'literary' writers and their literature in particular get to be; but to disregard the capacity for kinds of conserving or transforming action by particular writers in the (re)production of these posts returns us to a kind of structuralism which can only explain (re)production in terms of an already existing system and cannot explain the dynamics of change in which individual actors conserve or transform the system.

There is, of course, a logical problem with any explanation of social practices in terms of some kind of inculcated durable 'second nature' or *habitus*: Bourdieu can only account for new or revolutionary practices by reference to the already existing *habitus*. That is, the same *habitus* which reproduces society in a conservative way can also somehow reproduce it in a radical way. And if Bourdieu revises the theory so that dispositions which were once generated by the *habitus* become the product of objective conditions, he necessarily begs the question: what is it (and it cannot be the *habitus*) that changes objective conditions? Such a position is evident in his account of the way that objective conditions and not the *habitus* produce the dispositions with which agents negotiate their way through social transactions. As Richard Jenkins notes in one of the few stringent critiques of Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, the closest Bourdieu gets to explaining how *habitus* and particular dispositions are connected is to reverse his usual generalisation that *habitus* somehow produces dispositions.

In reality, the dispositions durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions...generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands.<sup>38</sup>

That is, the dispositions of agents are generated not by the *habitus* but by the probabilities available in the objective world. As Jenkins points out, this is a problematic view.

Even if people's behaviour *is* the result of the acceptance as probable of a future which would be similar to the present, how do they learn or identify that probability? In the first

instance it can only be through the internalisation (as children) of the expectations about the future articulated by significant (adult) others. *It is those expectations which produce probabilities and create social reality, not the other way around.* (Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu, 81, emphasis added)

Further, if the *habitus* is indeed transposable to other fields, presumably in which the *habitus* was not previously a 'native' regular and regulating mechanism, how can it be used by agents to assess the appropriateness of various ways of acting, speaking, feeling, and so on? Even further, how can the probability be assessed that certain conditions will arise in which those ways of acting, speaking, feeling will be appropriate; how can a *habitus*, once transposed to a field in which it was not previously regular, be thought to operate without conscious regulation as 'second nature,' and, finally, why is it that the *habitus* appears to be relatively internalised: transposable for some individuals in some situations but not for other individuals in other situations?<sup>39</sup> Not only is Bourdieu's explanation of the means by which agents acquire dispositions (to think, feel or act, or to write, read or buy particular books, for example) bad social theory but it is also unable, finally, to account for the inventive or generative capacities of agents. Bourdieu's *habitus* is, unfortunately for my purposes, a 'black box' which merely occupies the problematic space required in Bourdieu's social model to allow some link between the determined social system and free social agents.<sup>40</sup>

Because the nexus between past positions and current dispositions is framed as the *habitus* and the *habitus* is simply that space in which the two are supposed to coincide, Bourdieu is able to frame the rest of his theory of agents as 'position-takings' in various fields but is not able to resolve the possible or actual ways in which agency might work. Given the theory of *habitus* as it stands, Bourdieu's explanation is as much as to say that actors (or writers) only do new things in highly complex systems in which permutation is statistically likely. And *habitus* merely allows them to negotiate their way through this system without needing constant reference to a map. Clearly this does not get us very far in attempting to explain the agency of individual actors.

Anthony Giddens's structuration theory is an alternative attempt to articulate a theory of the relation between social agents and systems:

it is really a theory of agency.<sup>41</sup> The appeal of structuration theory is that it avoids the residual structuralism of Bourdieu's social model and provides an account of the way agents are simultaneously producers and products of the social structure. According to Giddens:

[s]tructure, as recursively organised sets of rules and resources, is out of time and space, save in its instantiations and co-ordination as memory traces, and is marked by an 'absence of the subject.' The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space. Analysing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. Crucial to the idea of structuration is the theorem of the duality of structure, ... [that is, that] the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise. (Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 25)

Giddens is at pains to emphasise the duality of social action as both medium and outcome, social agents as both products of past social activities and producers of future social activities. To gain further leverage for a theory of agency, Giddens distinguishes between 'structural properties' and 'structures.' Structural properties are the highly enduring institutionalised rules that enable recursive action; structures are the relations of transformation and mediation which act as the 'circuit switches' underlying and changing the social system (23-24). Structural properties are not themselves 'social products' but 'socially (re)producing' in day-to-day social action. If structural properties were products then they would already exist; presupposing that pre-constituted actors must at some time and place also have already existed in order to create them. This clearly runs counter to Giddens's project which is to explain the simultaneous, ongoing durability and adaptability of the social system. Because structural properties are (re)producing, agents can be seen as the determined enduring products and the free

adaptive producers of social action. In (re)producing (that is, inheriting and adapting) structural properties, agents also reproduce the conditions that make any action possible (26) and, regardless of the intentions of agents (for example, to conserve or change structural properties), all actions produce intended and unintended consequences. To summarise, Giddens theorises the agent as the simultaneous product and producer of the institutions which enable recursive social action; structures are, furthermore, relational, that is, allowing for structural change as a consequence of the mediating relations between agents and the institutional constraints of structural properties; and all actions have (un)intended consequences, allowing for structural change as a consequence of agents' actions whether they attempt to conserve or change the social system.

Structuration seems to enable Giddens to have his cake and eat it too. He can explain the durability of social systems and their adaptability in terms of the constraining and innovative practices of agents in their day-to-day actions. Agents operate according to more or less determining generalised procedural formulae (somewhat like the 'patterns of appropriate action' of Charles Taylor) in order to respond to or influence a range of social circumstances for which it would be impossible to specify individual rules. Such formulae direct our practical knowledge of ways of routinely negotiating social situations. Formulae may be 'deeply sedimented' in our day-to-day actions, apparently trivial and constantly invoked (for example, rules of language, conversational turn-taking, reading the line from the left to the right, and the page from top to bottom). Such intensively reproduced formulae are tacit, informal and weakly sanctioned because commonly held (21-23). They are of great interest for my purposes because, while deeply sedimented and apparently 'just there,' they are also, according to Giddens, formulae which (re)produce durable *and* adaptable social practices as a result of their generalised function as procedural formulae. The unproblematic appearance of most social practice – practice which 'just is' done in one way or another according to a largely inexpressive 'practical consciousness' – and the capacity of agents to perpetuate or transform such social practices has considerable theoretical potential to explain how it

is that we 'just know' how to use texts and also how we are able to do new things with them.<sup>42</sup>

Giddens's concept of regionalisation provides his theory of structuration with further potential to explain how it is that we operate according to conventional and innovative practice. Regionalisation refers to the 'situatedness' of any social practice.

The situated nature of social interaction can usefully be examined in relation to the different locales through which the daily activities of individuals are co-ordinated. Locales are not just places but *settings* of interaction; ... settings are used chronically – and largely in a tacit way – by social actors to sustain meaning in communicative acts. But settings are also regionalised in ways that heavily influence, and are influenced by, the serial character of encounters. ...[T]he substantially 'given' character of the physical *milieux* of day-to-day life interlaces with routine and is deeply influential in the contours of institutional reproduction. (xxv)

The context in which social actions occur form settings which agents routinely draw upon in the course of orienting what they do and what they say to one another.... Common awareness of these settings of action forms an anchoring element in the 'mutual knowledge' whereby agents make sense of what others say and do.... Settings of action and interaction, distributed across time-space and reproduced in the 'reversible [that is, chronically repeatable] time' of day-to-day activities, are integral to the structured form which both social life and language possess. (Giddens, 'Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and the Production of Culture,' 215)

The regionalised character of social interaction, dependent on the conventional 'stock of knowledge' specific to particular settings, usefully explains how we 'just do' know how to act and interact in a range of circumstances.<sup>43</sup> Settings that are relevant to particular practices may be material or relational. For example, in reading a text in a particular way the reader is oriented according to: the material setting, that is, to the physical space in which the action occurs, the potential to gain material

access to certain texts, the material constraints of the kind of text, say, a paperback, a broadsheet or tabloid newspaper, and so on; and the relational setting, for example, the demonstration or hiding of the symbolic codes made available by the action of reading, say, a 'blockbuster' or 'classic' paperback, the financial broadsheet or sports pages of a tabloid newspaper, the mutual knowledge held by present or possible co-agents, the pedagogically constructed capacity to make use of one or another text, and so on.

Regionalisation refers to the 'situatedness' of social practices and, as most of my examples of the orienting function of material and relational settings indicate, operates spatially, that is, where other social agents are present. But regionalisation is also durable over time in, for example, the sustained 'stock of knowledge' we carry as the result of previous, often pedagogical, experience of 'what to do with texts.' This temporal aspect of Giddens's concept appears to be most fruitful in explaining how it is that we use texts, just as we talk, in a way which is 'indexed' according to the orienting settings in which the action occurs, because such indexing is, according to Giddens, as capable of producing 'context-freedom' (215) as it is of producing constraints in terms of time and place. To apply the notion of the 'situated' and 'indexed' practice to the production – the using (writing, buying, reading) – of texts provides us with considerable analytical purchase. What we do with texts is 'regionalised' according to the situation which indexes, that is, indicates, particular uses.

But such situatedness and indexing does not necessarily prescribe absolute and fixed uses: some situations (such as women's *Star Trek* slash 'fanzines' and their writing and reading groups for example) index radical manipulations of texts.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, situations and the textual practices that they index occupy a dual space: they are located in the social structure that is manifested in the institutional and material world of schools, libraries, cataloguing protocols, book printing and binding practices, and so on, and in the socially acquired, habitual and actively transformable practical consciousness or stock of knowledge of social agents. So while situations are located in the social structure, for example in the material space of, say, a classroom which indexes a (possibly temporary) respect for the text, they are also located in the agent, for ex-

ample in the relational space of, say, the knowledge of codes which index expectations and ways of using (and therefore even finding) certain kinds of narrative, symbol, kinds of character and characterisation, features of various genres, and so on, which constrain what a particular text is thought to be. Such a situated knowledge is relational because it is constructed in, to stay with the same example, the pedagogical delivery and reception of expectations about certain texts where the text is used as a part of the relationship between teacher and student.

To see the uses of texts in this way is to see the position of the duality of the structure in which textual practices operate: texts always exist and get used in ways which are situated. And the situations which index particular uses of a text are always at the same time *in* the material conditions which surround the text, *in* the text itself and *in* the agent who uses the text. The structure in which texts get to be and get used in particular ways is, then, always at the same time *in and outside of the text, in and outside of the agent*. In other words, the social structure is constituted in the practices which direct agents and which agents direct. Consider the practices which are generated by our practical consciousness of different genres, for example, the rules and characteristics of the detective genre. (Genre is, of course, one cluster in the stock of knowledge of rules and characteristics alongside other basic indexing knowledge about texts – for example, that books are bound, bought, read over time, and so on.) The detective genre (re)produces (maintains and changes) expectations of kinds of possible plots, the setting up and resolution of typical kinds of problems, kinds of characters, stylistic characteristics and points of view. The generic rules that operate around and in the social use of detective novels do not exist only in the novels, or only in their readers or professional editors, reviewers, critics, or only in the market in which they are a commodity, but as a kind of typological knowledge that operates for and in all of them all of the time, changing over time and space. So our knowledge of the detective genre produces or instantiates the genre each time we draw on that knowledge. As Carolyn Miller argues, ‘actors must create structure, for themselves and for others,...by relying, recursively, on already available structures, on shared classifications and interpretations, which necessarily are social.’<sup>45</sup>

Of course, most of the time this stock of knowledge remains tacit and the practical way in which we draw on it reinforces its unspoken classifying power. Each time our practical consciousness instantiates a familiar and typical way of using a text it produces the structure that makes meaningful the using of the text in that way, yet it does this *as though* for the first time. For example, we might read *Madame Bovary* according to procedural formulae that index a response to psychological categories of characterisation and an expectation of the universal all-explaining knowledge of the narrator and in that reading we instantiate psychological characters and the omniscient narrative perspective as though *Madame Bovary* is the first moment in which they have appeared. Alternatively, each time we call on procedural formulae typical to some other social experience, importing formulae which were previously alien to the text and thus adapting new formulae to old texts or making new texts with alien formulae, we thereby alter the structure, and so for the first time *in fact* change it. For example, we might read *Madame Bovary* according to procedural formulae that index a response to the political categories of oppressed and oppressor and a questioning of the misogynist paternalism of Flaubert hiding behind his evasive 'nowhere present' narrator. Whichever way we read, whether we reproduce familiar and typical ways of using texts in which that way of using the text is 'just what we do' or reproduce new and oppositional ways of using texts in which that new way is 'what we do now,' we still produce and reproduce the text as the instantiation of the sorts of procedural formulae with which we negotiate every social experience. And each instantiation is always the only instantiation because the only one present and in use now.

Structuration theory, then, provides us with a useful model to explain the capacity of agents to act within *and* change the social structure, for example, the structure in which the agent and his or her use of texts is embedded. But the theory is not without its problems. Margaret Archer takes Giddens to task for what she calls his 'conflation,' as a mutually constructing agent-system, of two discrete social units – individual agents and the system in which they operate.<sup>46</sup> But Archer's project is, like Giddens's, to articulate a theory of the link between culture and agency. Like Giddens, she sees the agent as the instantiated moment of



expression of the social structure or, to use her term, the cultural system, and her work can usefully explain the *moment* in which agents deploy their agency to effect change, a problem left unresolved in structuration theory.

Structuration theory, according to Archer, over-extends the analogy between language and cultural practice. Giddens's approach is to say that culture, just like language, is 'both order and ordering' (Archer, *Culture and Agency*, 76) but this produces two unresolved consequences: social action becomes hyperactive and therefore volatile (because rules are always interpretable, allowing for change); and, on the other hand, social action becomes chronically recursive and therefore stable (because agents draw on rules which reproduce the social structure). Giddens needs volatility as a kind of 'wild card' to enable change but emphasises the recursive possibility in his model, according to Archer, in order to create a more recognisable description of social reality. But if, according to this emphasis, action is theorised as a practice of applying rules, we return to the old problem of determinism and the denial of the very possibility of agency itself. To get around this, Giddens positions the agent as both responsively ordered and generatively ordering (whether he or she replicates or transforms that order). The problem with this view is that it cannot explain *when* actors are more and when less free, when transforming and when replicating the social order (86-87). This 'when' problem surfaces in the failure of structuration theory to explain the way 'our open future is the next generation's constraints, just as the things restricting us are the product of the previous generation's use of its degrees of freedom' (91).

The failure to explain when an actor is hyperactive (allowing social volatility) and when recursive (maintaining social stability) results from Giddens's concept of duality, that is, his refusal to separate in theory the social system and the agent's social practice. Archer's project is precisely to separate them. Briefly, she argues that *logically consistent cultural 'parts'* are to do with what she calls 'Cultural System' integration. For example, if the ideas of X are consistent with those of Y, they are integrated parts in the Cultural System. By contrast, *causally cohesive relations* between people are to do with 'Socio-Cultural' integration. For example, if the ideas of X were influenced by Y, where Y is the

teacher, thinker, text, or whatever, they are integrated relations in Socio-Cultural practices. According to this view, the Cultural System pre-dates the practices of people: we are born into Cultural Systems which govern our present practices. This means, in turn, that Socio-Cultural practices follow from (and then condition) Culturally Systemic characteristics (xvi-xxii). So:

[t]here are *logical* relationships between components of the Cultural System .... There are *causal* influences exerted by the [Cultural System] on the Socio-Cultural ... level.... There are *causal* relationships between groups and individuals at the [Socio-Cultural] level .... There is elaboration of the [Cultural System] due to the [Socio-Cultural] level *modifying current logical relationships* and introducing new ones. (106, emphasis added)

By differentiating the logical relations between systemic parts from the causal relations between actors, Archer is able to explain when actors maintain social stability and when they initiate change: they do so at the Socio-Cultural level when inherited practices are elaborated in such a way as to modify the current logical relationships of the Cultural System, which then exerts stabilising pressure on consequent practices. But Socio-Cultural practices need not elaborate the Cultural System in a modifying way. This analytical model, additionally, usefully explains why orderly (or disorderly) Socio-Cultural practices may have a strong influence or no influence at all on order (or disorder) in the Cultural System. The logical forms in which the parts of the Cultural System are expressed do not necessarily correlate with the causal relationships in which various material struggles or agreements occur between individuals and groups. Finally, Archer is able to explain how the Cultural System acts as a brake on Socio-Cultural practices and how Socio-Cultural practices impel change in the Cultural System:

the Cultural System originates from the Socio-Cultural level (culture is man-made), but ... over time a stream of intelligibilia escape their progenitors and acquire autonomy [in a corpus of existing intelligibilia] ... after which time we can examine how they act back on subsequent generations of people ... [and] since people go on making culture we can

investigate how new items enter the Cultural System and old ones are displaced.<sup>47</sup> (144)

Of course, Archer's temporal sequence assumes that her Cultural System exists somehow autonomously when it can only exist in its always and only instantiated moment of use in Socio-Cultural practice. Even so, Archer usefully provides an analytical model of the dynamic nature of interaction which is absent in Giddens's theory to explain *when* agents' actions have causal results in the maintenance of and changes to social knowledge and practice.<sup>48</sup>

So what? Social theory has taken us some distance away from the terms of the original problem and I'd like to return to those terms now. I left Foucault with the promising analysis of the author in terms of the politics of authority and authorising but also with the significant problem embedded in his account of writing as a practice somehow allowing an *interplay* within the *prescriptions* of that process of authoring and interplay. Following a modified theory of structuration, it is possible to say that the 'internalised' practice of writing and reading and doing anything else with books is structural in the sense that it precedes the actual practices of writers, readers, and so on. What it is possible to do with books is prescribed, to use Foucault's term. We are born into a culture in which textual practices already exist (and undergo change). But our practices are also 'internal' in the sense that they are indexed according to the practical consciousness or stock of knowledge which we draw upon habitually and largely tacitly. These practices result from general procedural formulae which inculcate ways of doing things with books and, further, with textual relations which reinforce and make habitual that very stock of knowledge. Such relational practices and the possibilities for changing them occur in our socio-cultural *interaction*, or interplay, to use Foucault's term, which is, in turn, the result of structurally pre-given *situations* that determine what we know tacitly and do habitually to begin with. This means that our 'internally' held practices are 'externally' determined by characteristics of our inherited culture, and because that culture is instantiated in social interaction it is open to changes in practices which, in turn, determine the culture. But our practices are 'external' in another, more literal, sense because what

we do with books is constrained by the equally culturally determined material aspects of the textual artefact itself and the physical conditions in which we use them. Such material and physical conditions in which the practices of writing or reading are located are political, in that they are contested relations of power, and institutional, in that they are structurally durable. And it is to the politics and institutions of *'authorising'* that I shall now turn in the next two chapters.

- <sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Josué V. Harari, ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. London: Methuen, 1979, 141.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller, eds *What Is An Author?* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993; Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994; Molly Nesbit, 'What Was an Author?' *Yale French Studies*. 73 (1987) 229-57.
- <sup>3</sup> For an earlier, less politicised, version of this essay see Michel Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Donald F. Bouchard, ed. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977.
- <sup>4</sup> This argument will be more fully developed in Chapters Two and Three.
- <sup>5</sup> Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text' in Josué V. Harari, ed. *Textual Strategies*, 75.
- <sup>6</sup> See Chapter Three.
- <sup>7</sup> The term 'judgemental dolts' is Harold Garfinkel's. See Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984, 68 or Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner, eds *Social Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity, 1987, 229.
- <sup>8</sup> Josué Harari, 'Critical Factions/Critical Fictions,' in Josué V. Harari, ed. *Textual Strategies*, 22.
- <sup>9</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' in *Image-Music-Text*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, 145, emphasis added.
- <sup>10</sup> For a review of Leavisite, Practical and New Criticism see, for example, Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, or Peter Goodall, *High Culture Popular Culture*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995. For an interesting misinterpretation of the similarities between Leavisite criticism and post-structuralist literary theory see John Docker, *In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1984.
- <sup>11</sup> Barthes's early structuralist project was to attempt to expose the formal structures which underlie all narratives. See Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' in Susan Sontag, ed. *Barthes: Selected Writings*. London: Fontana, 1983.
- <sup>12</sup> Note the locating of 'From Work To Text' as the innovative position, a break with the past in Barthes's opening lines: 'Over the past several years, a change has been taking place in our ideas about ... (literary) work, ... [these] current developments ... [are] not a peaceful operation.' 73
- <sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Authors and Writers,' in Sontag, *Barthes: Selected Writings*. The essay dates from 1960.
- <sup>14</sup> See Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After*. London: Methuen, 1982, 90-94 and 175-76.
- <sup>15</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers,' in Sontag, ed. *Barthes: Selected Writings*, 379.
- <sup>16</sup> The actual quotation is, 'make it go.'
- <sup>17</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing.' Trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, in *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 92, quoted in Harari, 37.
- <sup>18</sup> See Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*. Trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. London: Cape, 1972, 21-24. The difficulty in mounting any critique of Barthes's views is, of course, to pin down *which* Barthes is the subject of attention, but so far as his theory of writing is concerned. Barthes's position is reasonably unchanging. For an account of his theoretical and stylistic shifts see Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes*. On writing and the submerged possibility of change by means of speech see especially 49-58.
- <sup>19</sup> For an excellent overview of phenomenology and its impact on literary theory see Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

- <sup>20</sup> The Bouchard version of the essay tends to emphasise the individuality of the author/authorial practice as a concrete noun while the Harari tends to emphasise author-functions as abstract nouns which are now systematic characteristics in the field of discourse.
- <sup>21</sup> The exact dating of this sort of shift and the rise of the significance of the authorising author is a matter of some debate and will be discussed in Chapter Two with regard to the authorising apparatus that constructs Shakespeare, the Shakespeare industry and the Shakespeare canon.
- <sup>22</sup> Foucault does not engage here with the problematic implications of discerning real and unreal speakers.
- <sup>23</sup> The phrase is quoted in Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, 172.
- <sup>24</sup> For an excellent discussion of the various ways in which genre functions or is deployed see Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994.
- <sup>25</sup> I shall be examining this most fruitful area of research in Chapter Two.
- <sup>26</sup> See Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*. London: Hogarth, 1990.
- <sup>27</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Orders of Discourse,' in Scott Lash, ed. *Post-Structuralist and Post-Modernist Sociology*. London: Elgar, 1991.
- <sup>28</sup> The lecture that provides the basis for the published article reveals Foucault, predictably enough, engaged in a number of debates, replying to criticisms of *The Order of Things* and preparing the ground for *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. See Kevin Brophy, *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing*. Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1998, 19-20.
- <sup>29</sup> See, for example, the explicit pedigree signalled by the essays in the collections by Biriotti and Miller, and Woodmansee and Jaszi, cited above.
- <sup>30</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock, 1972.
- <sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'Structures, Habitus and Practices,' from *The Logic of Practice*, in Anthony Giddens, David Held, Don Hubert, Debbie Seymour, John Thompson, eds *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 1994, 96.
- <sup>32</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, from *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, quoted in Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams, 'Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture,' in Richard Collins, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Paddy Scannell, Philip Schlesinger, Colin Sparks, eds *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*. London: Sage, 1986, 119-20. See also Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Polity, 1991, 12, and Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Sage, 1977, 78.
- <sup>33</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Genesis of the Concepts of Habitus and Field,' in *Sociocriticism*, 2, *Theories and Perspectives*, 2, 1985, 14, quoted in 'Editor's Introduction: Pierre Bourdieu on Art, Literature and Culture,' in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. and trans. Randal Johnson. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'From Rules to Strategies,' in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Trans. Matthew Adamson. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- <sup>35</sup> The phrase 'feel for the game' is used in most instances where Bourdieu explains the *habitus*. See especially 'From Rules to Strategies,' 62 and generally, where he deals explicitly with the game analogy.
- <sup>36</sup> Such rhetorical insistence is most in evidence in the secondary accounts of Bourdieu's concept. See, for example, John B. Thompson, 'Introduction,' in Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 12-3; Craig Calhoun, Edward Li Puma and Moishe Postone,

---

'Introduction: Bourdieu and Social Theory,' in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Taylor, 'To Follow a Rule,' in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*.

<sup>38</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 59, in Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, 1992, 81.

<sup>39</sup> This weakness is examined by Edward Li Puma in 'Culture and the Concept of Culture in A Theory of Practice,' in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, 24.

<sup>40</sup> The rather disparaging term is R.W. Connell's. See *Which Way is Up? Essays on Sex, Class and Culture*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983, 151.

<sup>41</sup> Giddens admits that 'structuration' is 'an unlovely term.' See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984, xvi.

<sup>42</sup> On practical consciousness see Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, xxii-xxiii and Giddens's 'Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and the Production of Culture,' in Giddens and Turner, eds *Social Theory Today*.

<sup>43</sup> Giddens owes the idea of a 'stock of knowledge' to Harold Garfinkel. On Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, which informs much of Giddens's work, see John C. Heritage, 'Ethnomethodology' in Giddens and Turner, *Social Theory Today* and John C. Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984.

<sup>44</sup> For an account of such textual manipulation see Constance Penley, 'Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture,' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, eds *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Carolyn R. Miller, 'Rhetorical Community: The Cultural Basis of Genre,' in Freedman and Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, 71. Miller relies extensively on structuration theory in her account of the situatedness of genre.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret S. Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988, 75-7.

<sup>47</sup> Several literary critics make implicit use of this kind of model. Harriet Hawkins's account of 'High' and 'Popular' genres, for example, argues that 'from generation to generation...[art] shapes the romantic, sexual and ideological fantasies by which it was shaped and can therefore be described as a creator of the culture by which it was created.' See Harriet Hawkins, *Classics and Trash: Traditions and Taboos in High Art and Popular Modern Genres*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990, xiii. Nancy Armstrong, similarly, argues that 'the discourse of sexuality is implicated in the shaping of the novel, ... [while] domestic fiction helped to produce a subject who understood herself in the psychological terms that had shaped fiction.' See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Archer's model helps to make structuration theory workable. Archer, however, throws out the whole structuration-theory baby with the bathwater of duality in a move which is typical of the procedural formulae of *opposition* with which agents engage in academic research. Her own theory of discrete systemic and socio-cultural parts operating to stabilise and change the social order is really an *advance* on the problematic explanation of stability and change offered by structuration theory.

## 2

### **Authorising: the historical construction of 'The Author' in the field of cultural production**

There is no outside the text.

Jacques Derrida<sup>1</sup>

Why is it that some writers get to be authors and others do not? And what accounts for the way some authors make it into literature's elusive A-list and, a more difficult thing, stay there? One answer used to be that certain texts and, by inference, the unproblematically conceived authors who produced them, just are better than others. But to answer such questions adequately requires a contextual approach. In this chapter I want to look at the things that occur outside texts in an attempt to explain how authors and their texts are produced and maintained. In order to do this I shall try not just to explain why some authors get to have influence in the field of cultural production but also how textual production as a whole and the production of 'literature' in particular depends upon the historically contested and instituted practices that constitute the field itself. My interest here is not just with the place of writers in such production but with the interaction of writers, publishers, teachers, critics, readers, librarians, and so on, in the textual practices which construct the relative value we assign to the category 'literature.'

To ask who counts in literary production, what counts as legitimate literary production and who decides is to problematise the author-as-originary-genius and to try to uncover the political and institutional practices which make the author in the first place. To answer such ques-



tions requires some analysis of cultural production as a system, as I do in the first part of this chapter, in a return to the social theory of Bourdieu. An historical account of the construction of the author, in the second part of the chapter, provides a practical demonstration of the political and institutional forces at play in the process of authorising. Those practices which centre on the publishing institutions that *make* the material product (material individuals called authors, their books and the merchandising apparatus which surrounds them) and those practices which centre on the pedagogical and other institutions that *consecrate* the material product (material individuals honoured by study, grants, prizes and frequently posthumous prestige, and their canonised books and *oeuvres*) will be considered in the next chapter.

The politics of authorising is, as Michel Foucault notes, a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The author is, according to Foucault, one of a number of policing presences in and surrounding texts. Foucault's argument is that the power of the author, the author's authority, is evident in his or her text and also in the extra-textual social practices which circumscribe the uses of his or her text. If we consider the cluster of practices embedded in 'authoring,' 'authentication' and 'authorising,' it can be seen that the apparent innocence of the author in authoring his or her text is undercut by the institutional and power-laden practices in which authoring occurs. To survey this cluster of authenticating and authorising it might be fruitful to follow the record of obsolete and prevailing senses of 'authentic,' 'author' and 'authority.' In fact, there is no option in the sort of critical exercise which I propose here but to obey the institutional and rhetorical authority of dictionary definitions and, given its institutional weight, the authoritative opinion of *The Oxford English Dictionary*.<sup>3</sup>

According to dictionary practice, the authentic or authenticated, the author and the authority of the authorised are all tautologically enmeshed. 'Authentic'ness refers to authority, originality or genuineness and, in obsolete forms, to the possession of legal force or qualification; 'authentication' refers to the proof of, or investing of a thing with, authority, the establishing of the title to credibility, the certifying of authorship; 'authority' refers to the power to enforce obedience or influence action, opinion or belief, such power being in some way derived or

delegated or a conferred right or title and in some cases made material in a quotation or book; 'authorising' refers to the setting up of, or giving legal force to, or giving formal approval to the authority of a thing; only the 'author' appears to be apolitical and non-institutional, referring to the person who originates or gives existence to a thing.<sup>4</sup>

There are several features of the process of enforcing etymological definitions that illuminate the practices which circumscribe who gets to use certain texts in certain ways. In defining key words to do with authentication, authority, authorising and the author, *The Oxford English Dictionary* brings its own considerable authority to bear in deciding which quotable uses are to be considered the authoritative ones. The remarkable institutional force of dictionaries is not that they 'freeze' the decision on meaning and use but that they arbitrate on almost every debate over meaning and use in the last resort. As a result of such arbitration, authority and authentication, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, are matters of power originating outside of texts; they appear, now redundantly, to have been legal matters (although debate about the authenticity of cultural works and the ownership of copyrights in them are still to do with authenticity, I would suggest, in a legal sense which is far from obsolete). Control over authority/authorising and the authentic/authentication is, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, a matter of *conferral* or *delegation*. (It would be surprising, given the position of *The Oxford English Dictionary* as an institution of authority and authentication, if the definition of such control in terms of *contest* had not been suppressed.) The author gains access to authenticity and authority by virtue of his or her originality, on the one hand, and by virtue of enjoying a position of conferred or certified power, on the other. That is, authors might be born original creators or they might achieve originality but they have the power of authority/authentication/authorising thrust upon them.

The final and most problematic circumscribing practice revealed by my *Oxford English Dictionary* survey is that authority is thought somehow to be capable of residing in texts, that is, it is available as the authoritative opinion or authoritative author manifested in a text, to be drawn upon or appealed to. But to locate authority in a material artefact is, of course, to confuse the object with its social use. The opinion or au-

thor manifested in a text would not *be* authoritative but would *become* authoritative, as the other *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions have pointed out, as a result of the conferring of power on those texts in each instance of their use in approved ways. It is, of course, possible that authority may be *in the text* but this is only in so far as the text is a socially situated object. A dictionary as a material object, for example, suggests certain expectations about the authority of its users by providing rhetorical triggers with which readers are familiar, that is, which readers bring to their use of the text, and which are conventionally supposed to denote authority.<sup>5</sup> The authority of *The Oxford English Dictionary* is in the text in the sense that readers bring certain expectations to their use of the text (say, the expectation to find listed words and the corresponding prevailing definitions of those words; and, needless to say, those expectations have to be met in the practical use of *The Oxford English Dictionary* in order for the expectations to maintain the force of a convention). But the authority is also *outside of the text*, conferred on the text as a result of, for example, individual and corporate attitudes to Oxford University Press, Oxford University, academic publishing, notions of research, editing, quotation, and so on. But the force of these institutions masks what is otherwise a highly unstable practice of enforcing meaning.

In trying to pin down authority, authentication and originality the dictionary simply chases its tail in a process only obscured by the positivism of its entries, on the one hand pretending to establish a definition of a word by using words always in need of positive definition and on the other treating the to-be-defined word as established fact while it is in the process of being established (listed, described, and then verified by quotation). This deferral even in the attempt to authenticate authority neatly questions the positive grounds on which the power of the author and the authorised text appear to rest. If they were conceivable prior to the age of mechanical reproduction, after Walter Benjamin the notions of positive originality and authenticity have become absurd. What is left is only the social claim to originality and authenticity, observable in the practices which maintain them.<sup>6</sup>

## THE CULTURAL FIELD AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

What happens when an individual uses texts (borrows, buys, writes, reads, shelves them, and so on) depends on the institutional and power-laden position of that individual in relation to other individuals or groups and other texts. In other words, texts are used in a field of cultural practices. Such a notion is basic to Foucault's concept of the discursive formation, that is, to that set of external conditions of existence or procedures which control, select, organise and redistribute discourses.<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu further expands the concept to encompass the entire range of social functions in and beyond discourse itself in an attempt to explain the structure and function of those practices which govern cultural production in general and literary production in particular.<sup>8</sup>

Bourdieu's model of cultural production relies on three key concepts, *habitus*, discussed in the previous chapter, the cultural field and cultural capital. While there are problems with the concept of *habitus*, Bourdieu's concept of field offers the considerable promise of being able to uncover the structural relations and practices which govern the use of literary texts. For Bourdieu, a field is:

a structured *system of social positions* – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants. It is also a *system of forces* which exist between these positions: a field is structured internally in terms of power relations. Positions stand in relationships of domination, subordination or equivalence (homology) to each other by virtue of the access they afford to the goods or resources (capital) which are at stake in the field. These goods can be principally differentiated into four categories: economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind or another) and symbolic capital (prestige and social honour).<sup>9</sup>

The cultural field, including the specific literary field (what Bourdieu calls the field of restricted cultural production), is that

space of positions and the space of position-takings in which [positions] are expressed ... [where] each position – e.g. the one which corresponds to a genre such as the novel or,

within this, to a sub-category such as the 'society novel' or the 'popular' novel – is subjectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions; ... [and where] every position, even the dominant one, depends for its very existence, and for the determinations it imposes on its occupants, on the other positions constituting the field; and ... [where] the structure of the field, i.e. of the space of positions, is nothing other than the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field. (Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 30)

According to this model of social practices, individuals or groups only operate within the possibilities of the field, which is itself defined by the particular resources at stake: access to cultural goods and profit defines the cultural field; access to intellectual goods and profit defines the educational field; and so on. Basic to this model is the notion that the (by definition 'at stake' or unequally distributed) resources that are available in and that determine the nature of each field also determine that all social practices are always forms of struggle. Finally, the model shows how individuals or groups operating within a particular field are constrained by the positions which are possible in the field and by their dispositions to position themselves in relation (domination, subordination, equivalence or opposition) to other individuals taking positions in the field.<sup>10</sup> Such position-taking is, in Bourdieu's sense, a form of political positioning. While Bourdieu's 'positions' appear to be objective and the 'dispositions' subjective, both really are subjective. But to admit that individuals or groups construct the field, its positions and positionings by a kind of common agreement about the value of certain resources and relations (including agreement about ways of taking an oppositional stance) does not weaken the analytical purchase of the model if it is accepted as a model of the *subjectively constructed nature of social relations*. But to do so, unfortunately for Bourdieu, prevents him from producing a convincing theoretical bridge between subjectivism and objectivism which is the central purpose of his theory.<sup>11</sup>

There is another problem with Bourdieu's model, however, which is to do with its status as a social model: are fields social realities or are they sociological constructs? Bourdieu suggests that they are merely the latter.

Constructing an object such as the literary field requires and enables us to make a radical break with the substantialist mode of thought ... which tends to foreground the individual, ~~or the visible interactions between individuals, at the~~ expense of the structural relations – invisible, or visible only through their effects – between social positions that are both occupied and manipulated by social agents which may be isolated individuals, groups or institutions. There are in fact very few other areas in which the glorification of 'great individuals,' unique creators irreducible to any condition or conditioning, is more common or uncontroversial. (29)

In other words, fields are useful heuristic devices for avoiding 'the substantialist mode of thought' and for articulating the systematic nature of social reality. This is not a serious problem for an analysis of the material and social conditions for the production of literature, in so far as such an analysis need not contend that the practices which underpin production are essentially systematic but only that they can be systematically explained.<sup>12</sup> In Part Two I shall try to show how the practices of writing and reading can be explained as system-like mediations between individuals and groups. The fact that an individual can be seen in a relation of subordination, say, to a teacher in the pre-tertiary education system, and as the result of certain textual practices, say, the practice of reading Shakespeare for success in university entrance examination, does not require that she or her teacher recognise such domination and subordination, nor that their relationship is 'really' one of domination and subordination, nor even that they 'play by the rules' of such a relation of domination and subordination, merely that the relationship can be usefully understood in terms of a typological system of domination and subordination. That such relations are typological and not real is essential to explaining why it is that an individual in a position of power in the cultural field, a teacher, say, or a publisher or librarian,

may operate in ways which are not *in fact* or which he or she believes are *not intended* to dominate.

In defining the field of cultural production above, Bourdieu employs the notion of capital. The concept is central to a theory of fields of contest in which unequally distributed resources are at stake and offers considerable promise as a means to explain the convertibility of forms of power within and across various fields.<sup>13</sup> He uses the term in a sense which is congruent with his use of the market metaphor to describe fields as systems of competition over unequally distributed resources. Even linguistic exchange, he argues, is subject to competition in a linguistic market. While there is a socially constructed disposition or a linguistic capacity to speak, according to Bourdieu, every speech act depends upon 'tak[ing] into account – in varying ways and to differing extents – the market conditions within which [linguistic] products will be received and valued by others' (Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 19) and 'the cultural capacity to use [linguistic] competence adequately in a determinate situation ... [as well as upon] the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships' (37). How an individual operates in the linguistic market, then, depends on how much and what kind of linguistic and cultural capacity or capital he or she possesses. This is so, presumably, because such capacity is deployed in the relationship of the individual with others in

an economic exchange ... [in] a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or market) ... which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit. In other words, utterances are not only ... signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority*, intended to be believed and obeyed. (66)

To conceive of linguistic relations in the economic terms of production and consumption provides considerable analytical purchase for the explanation of the mode of operation of written texts in a system of domination and subordination. But it depends on a dubious and unex-

plained slippage of *capacity* (37) into *capital* (66). Capital seems, for Bourdieu, to mean simply resources. For example, in order

to produce a written discourse worthy of being published ... [one requires] the capital of instruments of expression (presupposing appropriation of the resources deposited in objectified form in libraries – books, and in particular in the ‘classics’, grammars and dictionaries) ... [and such] instruments of production ... as rhetorical devices, genres, legitimate styles and manners and, more generally, all the formulations destined to be ‘authoritative’ and to be cited as of ‘good usage’ ... [which] confer ... on those who engage in it a power over language and thereby over the ordinary users of language as well as over their capital. (57-58)

What makes such resources of competence into capital remains unclear. Bourdieu seems to equate the capacity for profit with capitalising.<sup>14</sup> There are difficulties with this view for a theory of contested relations. For one thing, capital is not simply the capacity for profit but the capacity to control and increase for oneself valuable convertible resources (such as the labour, knowledge or skills of others as well as material resources). For another, to suppose that one individual’s profit is another’s loss depends precisely on some kind of agreement on the value of the thing at stake. By deploying certain linguistic forms such that I garner, say, some kind of prestige in some public meeting does not necessitate the loss of actual prestige or even the potential prestige available for others who regard speaking at public meetings as a sign of social naivety. Bourdieu’s model of fields does not show how resources are capital. That is, it sidesteps the question regarding why they are valuable, and constructs an illogical notion of non-exchangeable capital.

Capital, for Bourdieu, seems to operate as a loose metaphorical term for assets in the limited sense where assets are merely items of exchangeable value, in the last instance in terms of money value. This view underlies his claim that various kinds of capital can be converted or, so to speak, ‘cashed in.’<sup>15</sup> The archetype of capital conversion is, for Bourdieu, the cashing in of educational qualifications for jobs.<sup>16</sup> Now, the cashing in of economic capital is a real trade: the economic capital goes into, say, education (and does not then exist as an available eco-



conomic resource because paid out for and then commodified as education). But the cashing in of cultural capital is a different sort of trade which does not involve real cashing in: the cultural capital *does not go into* employment (and still exists as an available cultural resource which can be used 'off the job'). The social actor who 'trades' his or her cultural capital for employment cannot be constrained so that it is used only 'on the job,' whereas the 'owner' of economic capital who trades it for education no longer has access to the dollars which were originally his or her economic capital, only to certain cultural resources made available by his or her education.

If we suppose that there is such a thing as cultural capital, that is, that cultural resources can be reinvested to make more resources, it can be seen as capital only in so far as the use of the resource is actually used to generate greater resources and access to yet other resources. For example, cultural capital (educational knowledge) might be invested to develop further capital (the instructed skill to distinguish various periods of furniture, for example) which is capital only if it leads to the capacity for and realisation of further resource accumulation. The capital metaphor, that is, necessarily leads to a final (if only ever potential) economic reduction: one cashes in the cultural capital for profit (the ability to spot a bargain Louis Quinze chair in a garage sale, getting a job at Christie's, or whatever). It could be argued that the trade on such accumulated cultural capital (like distinguishing various periods of furniture) may not lead to an economic cashing in but, instead, to the 'purchase' of prestige or 'symbolic capital.' But Bourdieu's 'symbolic capital' is also reducible, as John Thompson notes, to a final economic profit, to 'a logic that is economic in a broad ... sense, [that is] the augmentation of *some* kind of "capital"' (Thompson, 'Introduction' to *Language and Symbolic Power*, 15). Whatever the problems may be with Bourdieu's 'capital,' the maximisation of resources is, in fact, merely assumed in his theory and therefore cannot explain why agents seek to accumulate capital. But Bourdieu's 'symbolic capital' also introduces a new problem. Symbolic capital is not really capital at all. It is, rather, a form of end-point profit. One might profit by it (by, say, getting a job because of one's prestige) but one cannot trade symbolic capital

(say, prestige) for cultural capital (say, education). The convertibility appears not, in the end, to be reversible, as John Frow notes.<sup>17</sup>

Such problems surface in Bourdieu's theory as a result of the under-theorising of the relations between kinds of resource, and the major symptom of this problem is to be found in the concept of capital conversion as the mere capacity to cash in one form of resource for another. Cashing in presupposes the over-determination of all fields by the economic field in which the maximisation of profit (to do with whatever resources are at stake, be they currency, prestige, ATP rankings, or whatever) is dominant. If fields are autonomous then the fact that they are over-determined by the economic field in the last instance is a serious contradiction. Further, Bourdieu's theorising of various kinds of capital, as we have seen, produces a naive economism of social action. And the raw equation of economic capital with the bourgeoisie and cultural capital with the intelligentsia reifies what begins in Bourdieu's analysis as merely methodologically differentiated social categories.<sup>18</sup> Finally, his use of the term 'capital' to explain the various kinds of trade possible in fields is, by and large, spurious. Not all practices are necessarily economic in the sense of being reducible to the maximisation of profit. And not all resources are reducible to trade or conversion. Resources like education ('cultural capital') cannot, strictly speaking, be traded. The assumption that they can is a weakness that is apparent in the theory of the cashing in of capital. The concept of cultural and symbolic capital both suffer as a consequence of their 'one-way tradeability.' For example, one might *profit* by but cannot *trade* prestige ('symbolic capital'). Bourdieu's theory, as a result, cannot specify how symbols generate profits in fields other than the field of cultural production.<sup>19</sup> In using the term 'capital' in order to equate economic or even cultural capital with symbolic capital Bourdieu commits a fundamental category mistake because 'symbolic capital,' prestige, is an end-point purchased and subsequently untradeable good.

Given that Bourdieu's theory of fields suffers as a consequence of the reductive economism of his model of capital, we would do well to reject the concept of cultural capital. This is an advantageous move not just because of the theoretical weaknesses in the concept of cultural and symbolic capital but because the concept as Bourdieu deploys it has un-

fortunate consequences for a theory of cultural production. Bourdieu's view of capital leads him to argue that the final necessary function of specific cultural products is to create or mark arbitrary *distinctions* between social groups.

Like every sort of taste, [aesthetic taste] unites and separates. Being the product of the conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others. And it distinguishes in an essential way, since taste is the basis of all that one has – people and things – and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others.<sup>20</sup>

Such a capacity for distinction requires the misrecognition of the power relations that are embedded in cultural activities as merely natural.<sup>21</sup> But such misrecognition requires a contradictory stance by social agents: agents are able to bring their subjective knowledge to bear in order to perceive their objective domination (for example, the proletariat perceives its domination by the bourgeoisie) as inevitable, that is, as 'natural,' 'a fact of life'; but at the same time it cannot recognise the means by which such domination is legitimated, that is, constructed as a social relation of inequality. If cultural productions are designed to mark distinctions between social groups it would seem, so far as Bourdieu is concerned, that all agents can distinguish their subjective cultural difference up to a point but then fail to see the legitimating function of their cultural activities.<sup>22</sup>

Cultural activities certainly do maintain distinctions between social groups and this function is often misrecognised in the cultural practices of agents, but to explain cultural activity as an always and only misrecognised way of distinguishing agents in social groups is an impoverished and unnecessarily reductive understanding of cultural production that ignores the complex institutionally and historically motivated background to cultural production in general and the conditions for the production of 'literature' in particular. Edward Li Puma illustrates the poverty of Bourdieu's theory of distinction in the cultural field by reference to the production of luxury cars:

the quest for distinction which stimulates the production of luxury cars cannot explain why 'high-end' German car-makers ... bank-rolled the development of a computerised, anti-lock braking system' .... To understand what motivated German car-makers requires knowledge about cultural ideas of technology and performance, the historical place of the automobile in the production of the modern capitalist consciousness, how these ideas are interrelated to capital, plus cultural notions of distinction (that auto-makers could make a non-visible feature 'distinctive' through mass media advertising). (Li Puma, 'Culture and the Concept of Culture in a Theory of Practice,' 30-31)

To explain why certain products may distinguish certain classes requires more than an analysis of the mechanics of distinction. The fact that the use of certain kinds of books does distinguish certain social groups or is typical of certain groups is to do with more than the process of making distinctions: to do with cultural ideas about books, reading and talking about them, and to do with the historically and institutionally grounded status of education and language use and how these relate to perceptions of subjectively constructed and relational categories measured in terms of status, income, class, and so on.

Bourdieu's theory of capital is, at best, over-extended and, at worst, weakly theorised. Curiously, this does not weaken the general analytical purchase provided by the theory of social fields. In fact, by disposing of the problematic concepts of cultural and symbolic capital a theory of social fields is better able to account for the historically and institutionally grounded nature of social practices and especially the cultural practices in which I am particularly interested.

It must be stressed that a theory of fields provides us merely with an analytical tool for explaining social action. It may well be that social agents engaged in various kinds of cultural production perceive a 'cultural field' and their position in it as social realities, but I do not wish to argue that fields are therefore necessarily social realities, merely that a theory of fields may help to explain in a systematic way the relations between social agents. The concept of positions and positioning

within fields allows us to examine the more or less strategic actions of social agents as *possibilities* within the field. For example, the network of publishers, editors and writers in the literary sub-field operates according to the possible positions and relations between agents in those positions and according to the strategic positionings which they take in relation to one another over time. So editors of short stories, for example (the focus of the case studies in Part Two), operate according to the possibilities established by the relation between various current publishers and their policies (to concentrate, say, on the school market, on women writers, on academic 'critical editions,' on 'new' writing, and so on); by the relation between current and past productions (in a relation of development, revision, opposition) and anthologising practices (dividing the anthology selection into 'nationalist,' 'modern,' 'contemporary' writing, revising or ignoring such divisions, selecting stories by 'name' or 'unknown' writers, selecting previously published or unpublished stories); by ideological position which various individuals (Leonie Kramer, say, or Frank Moorhouse), texts (Kramer's *My Country*, say, or Anna Gibbs and Alison Tilson's *Frictions: An Anthology of Fiction by Women*), or publishers (Oxford University Press, say, or Sybilla) are thought by agents in the field to represent, and so on.

Before examining the practices of social agents in the construction of 'Australian short stories' of one shape or another it is necessary to elaborate on Bourdieu's concept of fields in order to show how the positions and positionings in the literary field are contingent possibilities, to show them, that is, as historical developments, and to explain how they endure over time, that is, as institutionally maintained possibilities. I shall attempt to show how a theory of fields is able: 1. to account for the relative autonomy of the literary field, by virtue of recognising the internal construction of the field which is not reducible to an economic maximisation of profit; 2. to account for the historically specific conditions which constrain what counts in various fields, for example, how the texts, agents and practices that count as the 'literary' ones which constitute the literary field are produced in the struggles and alliances of agents in the field over time; and 3. to account for the present and more or less durable, that is, institutionalised, nature of

fields like the literary field, as a set of institutionalised instances constraining the practices of the agents who operate within them.

In salvaging the concept of field I want to show how collaborative or competing agents operate according to the possibilities – the rules, conflicts and hierarchies – of a *system* of relationships. What Bourdieu's concept of field cannot do is articulate relationships of power in terms of capital, attractive though that concept might at first sight have seemed, precisely because he skirts the problem of value. Capital is, strictly, specific to the economic field as a way of organising the things or relations which are at stake or which count in the economic field. To determine why it constrains the relations of power and the relative value of various resources and practices depends upon seeing how it has developed historically and upon describing those institutions which maintain it. In the literary field, capital (that is, economic capital) only counts to the extent that the pressure to maximise resources typical of the economic field intrudes – in the form of financial decisions by arts organisations, publishers and the like – into the practices of the literary field. This pressure may influence the way a writer writes, for example, or the sort of projects which he or she attempts, as well as the decisions of editors to underwrite a particular project given competing products in the market. Such pressures on material production may be accurately explained in economic terms, but other literary practices to do with, say, the production of the reader and the reader's text may not be so easily explicable in terms of a theory of resource maximisation in a competitive market.

Where economic strategies do determine the actions of agents in the literary field this is not necessarily a case of a permanent, that is, structural over-determination, merely of the fact that the economic field may, as the result of its relation to the literary field at a particular time, be in a particular relation of domination (for example, in a period and place where the material production and distribution of texts requires economic capital). Further, practices or resources which are valued in the literary field may, at a particular time, similarly intrude into the economic field. By disposing of an over-determining concept of 'capital' and the economic reduction that it produces, it is *possible* to consider any field as more or less autonomous, the present and chang-

ing instance of the possible positions and positionings, the expectations, attitudes and practices constructed from the previous 'moves' in the field by social agents. At the same time it becomes *necessary* to consider any field in terms of the historically situated institutions which are embedded in the sedimented practices that constitute the field. One of the most important institutions in the literary field is, of course, the institution of the author.

### **THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF AUTHORISING**

The way the literary field operates appears to be so natural as not to require comment. But the central place that has been accorded to the author, the 'natural' right of the author-as-originator to control his or her text, the function of reviewers, readers and critics merely as 'interpreters' of the supposedly pre-existing text have been problematised by recent literary theory and textual studies of the kind inaugurated by Michel Foucault in 'What Is An Author?'<sup>23</sup> Such a 'natural' conceptualisation of literary practices has been the subject of considerable attention, particularly by 'new historicist' literary critics whose project has been to uncover the processes by which the author and the text have been constructed.<sup>24</sup>

Authors, texts and the entire aesthetic apparatus which presently if problematically dominates the literary field are, as Martha Woodmansee shows in her remarkable study of *The Author, Art, and the Market*, the present manifestations of previous political struggles.<sup>25</sup> The authority of the author, she argues, is a product of the particular conditions in which writers sought to protect their labour and works in eighteenth-century Europe (particularly in Germany). The articulation by eighteenth-century writers of a view of literary production as *disinterested*, where literature was seen as intrinsically valuable (and therefore not subject to market forces when it came to questions about value), was a political strategy intended to arm the status of high-cultural works against their usually low popularity. Such a strategy sought to free particular writers (those who saw their work as being the work of 'high culture') from subordination to publishers and the forces of market determination and to bolster their claim to patronage (including state sponsorship). In order to develop the leverage for such a strategy,

writers who made the claim to high-cultural distinction emphasised *originality* as the hallmark of literary value, where literary value was supposed to be an intrinsic quality. By asserting that originality is the central feature of 'literariness,' of course, writers of 'high culture' attempted to take control over who was to decide what counted in the literary field. What counted, according to an ideology of disinterestedness and originality, was work which ignored the tried-and-true formulae ~~that supposedly guaranteed high sales and widespread appreciation by a~~ tasteless and uninformed audience. But such attempts by the 'high-cultural' author to reorientate what counted in the field were aimed at protecting his labour and sales against the possibilities of imitation and piracy. When originality is the central determinant of literary value nobody can compete by imitating successful works. Clearly, the 'high-cultural' author's claim to disinterestedness was highly interested; and his claim to power as the originator of the original work was basically a means to protect his labour from pirate publishers and other writers with an eye to the market.

Woodmansee's method in showing this is to uncover the specifically situated nature of practices in the literary field, to explain the political point of practices which now appear to be just the way things are, so natural, endemic, automatic because they work so effectively to protect the interests of particular agents that nobody even has to think about them. When academic practitioners like literary critics make disinterested, original literature their positive object of study, Woodmansee argues, they obscure or obliterate the political, specifically situated and temporal nature of such practices. The difficulty in uncovering such a process is that the mechanisms of analysis (using analytical tools and categories from, say, the philosophy of aesthetics or from literary criticism) are self-serving and constitute parts of the structure of the problematic object ('art,' say, or 'literature') that is to be analysed, as can be seen, Woodmansee argues, in the tendency to discuss aesthetics anachronistically. She takes Morris Weitz to task, for example, for obliterating the difference between pre-eighteenth-century questions about the nature of poetry, music, sculpture, and so on, and the post-eighteenth-century question, 'What is *art*?' She points out that, even while Weitz is in the process of including in his anthology of *Problems in*



*Aesthetics* Paul Kristeller's 'The Modern System of the Arts' (an essay which stresses the *difference* between pre-eighteenth-century concepts of artistic practices and a post-eighteenth-century general theory of aesthetics), he conflates the discrete categories and distinct concepts of pre-eighteenth-century painters, sculptors, poets, and so on, and those who wrote about their work, with the generalised aesthetic theories of 'Art' which only emerged in the eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> By so doing, Weitz obscures the distinction Kristeller laboured to uncover and makes the concept of art and the problems of aesthetics once again seemingly timeless and universal.

Woodmansee's analysis of Weitz's conflation illustrates how the practices in which academics engage underpin any view of art or literature so that the very practices which are to be interrogated are frequently 'built in' to the interrogation. In Woodmansee's case, in order to undertake an analysis of the history of aesthetics, she must first uncover the present-day practices, like those of Morris Weitz, which privilege a certain way of looking at art and literature. Weitz, for example, privileges philosophical accounts of aesthetic problems in his anthology at the expense of the reviews, writers' prefaces, textbooks, handbooks, consumer manuals which are 'written not to *explain* but to *intervene* and to *influence* practice [such] that they fall outside the purview of the historians of aesthetics' (Woodmansee, *The Author Art, and the Market*, 4). Woodmansee's project, then, requires the casting of a wider net in order to catch and examine those practices (like valorising the disinterested author and originary genius) which still underpin the claims to power of those agents who occupy the 'high cultural' position in the literary field.

The stakes in the field of literary production in Australia (my focus in the case studies in Part Two) have been determined by the previous social and economic conditions in which agents in the field in other parts of the world competed and by the ongoing outcomes of that competition. Woodmansee charts certain key moments of change in the literary field in Germany and England in order to show where the source of disinterest and originality lies and what interests they served. The disinterested aesthetics of writers such as Karl Phillip Moritz, she argues, resulted from an emphasis on such concepts as God's self-suffi-

cient perfection and the self-sufficiency of the individual in relation to Him. That is, Moritz's aesthetic perspective on the self-sufficient and disinterested work is transferred from his religious view (18-19). Once God can be thought of in terms of self-sufficiency it is possible to see art as equally self-sufficient: it exists independently of the interests of any human agent, producer or consumer. But the novelty in extricating human agents and things (like texts) from a system of mutual dependency and giving them autonomy was not simply the consequence of changing religious beliefs. More likely, changing religious beliefs reflect deeper social shifts in the relations between human agents and things which concerned the determination of questions to do with individual rights and possessions. The new eighteenth-century perception of the individual as self-sufficient, self-determining, independent marks a general shift in the social relations of the time. The 'individual' shifts at the end of the eighteenth century from being *indivisible* from his social group to being precisely *divided*. Such a shift has consequences for the way power is explained. The new (autonomous) individual, as John Locke articulates, *owns* himself rather than *owing* society, and possesses *in himself* sovereign rights which were previously located in a hierarchical social system of obligation.<sup>27</sup> The aesthetic of disinterestedness is, then, one aspect of a system of shifting social relations in which the individual and the texts which he or she produces come to be seen as autonomous. Only with such autonomy can the producer of the autonomous text or work of art be thought of as disinterested, which culminates in the view of 'art for art's sake' in the late-nineteenth century, because the producer is not thought to *depend* upon the interests of others.

The writer and text, in the eighteenth century, possess a new relation in terms of disinterest, but disinterest is not simply a manifestation of benign social changes. Disinterest is deployed in the highly particular struggle between 'good writers [who produce] for more noble purposes' and 'mediocre pen-pushers and avaricious publishers [who] peddle their poor merchandise.'<sup>28</sup> Disinterest enables 'noble writers' to lay claim to the rewards of prestige and subsequent patronage in the literary field, even while they concede the loss of financial rewards to the 'merchandising pen-pushers.' As a political move it allows the 'noble

writer' to defend the value of his or her work against a hostile reception by the market by claiming that its value is intrinsic, to be found somewhere in the perfect harmonious construction of the work (32). Such a claim is, of course, highly useful the more difficult the work is, or the more unfavourable its reception. But the interesting side-effect is that the origin of the text seems only to be the autonomous writer, and the relation between the writer and the text becomes the only one worth bothering about.

In order for writers to claim, as indeed Wordsworth claimed, that they were the autonomous causes of otherwise autonomous texts, doing 'what was never done before,' they needed to emphasise their individual, exclusive, intellectual creation of the text, emphasising that: 'every Author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed ... [by doing] what was never done before.'<sup>29</sup> Wordsworth's claim to originality establishes the appropriate grounds for originality in *novelty*; and asserts that the claim to being the origin of the text need only go as far back as the individual writer.<sup>30</sup> Why he only traces originality back to that point is, of course, highly self-interested. And the possessive terms by which the individual emerges, where, according to Locke, 'every Man has a Property in his own Person' (quoted in de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 8), have remained central in the field of cultural production, as can be seen in the development of the 'ownership of the text' by the copyright-protected individual, unique, autonomous, originating author.

Our conception of legal copyright is, in fact, merely the present trace of the process of individuation in which writers struggled to establish their access to and continued hold on power (that is, to the right to the name of 'the author' and to property rights in 'the work'). Copyright, in other words, is the latest institutionalised instance of those contested power relations in which certain social agents are able to claim legal protection for their writing as the unique, original products of the intellection of unique individuals.<sup>31</sup> That the rules (like the rule granting copyright) governing the stakes (like the stake in intellectual property) are the result of contingent events and struggles between various stakeholders in the field of literary production demonstrates

that the operative possibilities (the available positions, positionings and resources) in the field are historically constituted: what counts and why it counts in the field of literary production depends on the previous moves in the field.

The processes by which copyright and the author emerged are radically contingent. The capacity for copyrighting depended, for example, on the possibility of producing stable reproducible texts, which was ~~in turn dependent on printing technology~~. And it was only when printing made possible the stable relation between particular writers, printers and texts that some writers were able to see and conduct themselves as the responsible proprietors of their written work.<sup>32</sup> As well, the growth of the institution of copyright and its effect on the contemporary notion of 'the author' also depended on the extremely particular legal struggles of book producers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe.

In his analysis of the invention of copyright Mark Rose uncovers the processes by which copyright has become an institution of property, and his account traces the rise of a concept of abstract property – intellectual property – which only *appears* to be a development from the way books were regulated during the Renaissance. In fact, Rose argues, our notion of copyright depends on a radical shift from the previous way of thinking about books and is founded on the same Lockean theory of self-sufficient and self-defining self-ownership which underpins the rise of the individual.<sup>33</sup> That is, the rise of copyright and the autonomy of the disinterested author who goes with it both result from radical shifts in the conception of the individual which arise out of the pressure of new social relations stimulated by the rise of the new bourgeoisie and the decline of feudal relations of power.<sup>34</sup>

The case law codification of copyright which constructed the abstract form of intellectual property that we take for granted today neatly reflects the politically grounded and contingent nature of the institutions of copyright which underlie the literary field. The 1710 Statute of Anne, the direct English ancestor of contemporary versions of copyright, was established as a result of the lobbying of parliament, principally by booksellers but also by writers.<sup>35</sup> But to claim some kind of organic development of copyright from the Statute of Anne would be to misread the process by which the stakes in the literary field have come

to be. The Statute of Anne itself is the result of particular publishing conditions in Britain (a market struggle between the established London Stationers Company and provincial, mostly Scottish, book publishers who 'pirated' the London editions) and a factional alliance between representatives of producers like the London Stationers Company and writers, who sought to protect their texts from 'piracy,' and the government bureaucracy with its interest in censorship (Rose, *Authors and Owners*, 33-36).

Because the Licensing Act had lapsed in 1695 (as the result of objections to censorship as an infringement of the rights of individuals) booksellers and writers were, in effect, able to ally themselves with those calling for the reintroduction of censorship in order to create tighter press regulation. That copyright is not an organic development but emerged from particular conditions is evident, further, in the fact that the act does not protect the intellectual property of the writer; it merely gives legal recognition to the writer and allows for the legal ownership of the material text (49), and in the fact that it is only the later case law (that is, legally contested) interpretations of the Statute of Anne which radically modified the intention of the act in order to satisfy the particular interests of some writers, adapting the law to cover a new concern with intellectual property. That is, copyright, like 'the author' which it protects, emerged out of particular contests as a contested practice in the literary field. Our notions of the copyright protection of intellectual property and of the genius author are, then, both particular, possibly temporary positions which have come to dominate the field as the result of particular struggles between agents with competing interests. Like 'originality,' copyright emerged as a means by which to protect the interests of some agents in the literary field.

The Statute of Anne itself registers this fact, on the one hand protecting the author's or proprietor's right to the work (principally in favour of the interests of the London booksellers) but on the other limiting this protection to twenty-eight years for new works or twenty-one for those already in print after which time the property was to fall into the common domain (allowing provincial booksellers the right to reprint). The reason, as Margreta de Grazia argues, that the London booksellers deployed Locke's concept of property in order to pursue

their case was that if the right to copy literary works was a matter of property under common law this would supersede the civil law Statute of Anne and its limit on the period of protection.<sup>36</sup> The London booksellers failed in their attempt to maintain perpetual copyright, but in arguing for it they produced the notion of copyright as a protection of intellectual property. Case law interpretation of the Statute consistently ruled in favour of perpetual property rights until the 1774 ruling against the London booksellers found in favour of a printer who had published a copy of a title whose statutory limitation had lapsed. Even so, the arguments used by the London booksellers in favour of a (perpetual) common law property right which resulted from the unique and individual nature of the author and his or her production of the literary work created a persisting conception of the literary work as a *new creation* (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 186-87).

That such arguments did not, in fact, succeed in protecting literary property in perpetuity in no way cancelled their power in constructing the way our present notion of limited copyright conceives of the writer's abstract property in his work. To take one example of the legal construction of a copyright in abstract goods or intellectual property, in the suit of Alexander Pope against Edmund Curll, the judge's decision establishes the notion of abstract copyright beyond the material text. The decision, in Pope's favour, to recognise his literary property as a thing distinct from material ink and paper established copyright as a protection of abstract property and, in so doing, constructed and gave privileged protection to the writer as an autonomous creator. Once the writer owns his work in an abstract sense (that is, once he is legally recognised in this way) he becomes independent of (that is, legally entitled to claim independence from) the social and material conditions in which writing was previously thought to take place (Rose, *Authors and Owners*, 59-66). The author now stands alone. That this becomes possible, that the property in a text is abstracted, *reflects* and at the same time *influences* actual practices so that writing can be considered to involve solitary writers producing texts in isolation. Legal entities like intellectual property, in other words, create social practices, just as they are themselves the product of social practices.

The social practices which informed the legal development of intellectual property in the case of Pope against Curll may not be known. But at least one of the social practices which informed the legal argument on originality is quite clear. The originality of a work was used early on in legal dispute as a means to secure the writer protection of his property. Following Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*, the work should be seen, according to those arguing for the protection of authors' rights, as the property of the writer because it is an *embodiment* of him (114).<sup>37</sup> That is, the work is an expression of the writer's unique person not just a product of his labour. Young's *Conjectures* on originality as an organic and personal representation of the writer, as both Mark Rose and Martha Woodmansee note, provided the central argument for the protection of authors' rights in Britain and Germany.<sup>38</sup>

By virtue of this originality embodied in the work, the author was able to claim or have conferred on him or her the right to control of the text, principally for the financial protection of a property. We can see how copyright law attempts to enforce this right to protection from reproduction, appropriation or other use by considering the legal constraints on the use of any book, proclaimed on the page following the title page, but the title page itself is a significant instituted practice by which one individual claims (or a list of corporate individuals claim) the title to 'author.'<sup>39</sup> On the title page the title of the work appears first, thereby titling the work; the naming of an individual follows and it is this naming which *entitles* the named individual to be known as 'the author' of the work. Naming operates here in the manner of *underwriting* in the broad sense that the naming of the individual is a kind of documentary signature denoting ownership and carrying legal weight, but also in the sense that the individual indicates his or her position as the guarantor of the work. This legal, and principally insurance, sense of the author as the underwriting individual who controls the work marks the double role of 'the author.' To guarantee involves the securing of the possession of the written work to an individual writer but, more importantly, depends upon that individual making him or herself responsible for the *genuineness* of the work. The author as guarantor, finally, establishes the relation of the originating writer (who ini-

tially holds all the shares in the work) to the subsequent readers (who take up those shares). In doing this, the practices which *entitle* the author, that is, that individual who is named as the underwriting authority for the work, protect the financial interest of that individual in the genuine work and his or her right to sell that work to others.

The establishment of intellectual property has, however, another consequence besides allowing for the legal protection of the works of writers. The claim that the text is a unique product of the author's mind makes the text into a representation of the writer's consciousness and therefore copyrightable but, further, it creates the conditions in which such textual representations can be considered to be only the expression of 'the textual author.' Beyond this, it makes it possible to see this expression as a 'canonical' representation of the author based on a reading of the works earmarked as being 'in the canon.'<sup>40</sup> When the view that texts represent personalities is established, the conditions then exist for texts and canons to be interrogated in order to discover the textually developing psychology of the author, the sort of interrogation that is typical of the man-and-his-work literary criticism which was the target of Foucault's initial attack in 'What Is An Author?' Foucault's project in that essay, as I tried to show in Chapter One, was to uncover the very means by which 'the author' is a policing authority in and of his text. Armed with that Foucauldian perspective, the project of Rose and Woodmansee in their situating of writers in the literary field seeks to make transparent those historically constituted practices which define the stakes and make the field work in the way it does today.

### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE**

In arguing that the positions and strategies which are possible in the literary field are historical constructs I have tried to show that what a writer or reader or teacher of 'literature' does today is constrained by what has previously been done. But the picture is more complicated than this. The processes which construct the possibilities in the literary field are not simply chronological. Authors are also retrospectively constructed in order that they might be fitted into the possibilities of the contemporary field. The dominant artefact in the literary field, 'Shakespeare,' illustrates this process exceptionally well. 'Shakespeare' is



still alive and kicking as a 'literary author' because his constructed 'individual identity' and 'works' have endured as a result of being taken up and used by key players who have made and continue to make 'Shakespeare' in order to maintain their control of some of the most valued stakes in the field. Not surprisingly, given the number of Shakespearean scholars in the academic field, the retrospective construction of Shakespeare which I shall describe below has become so much an object of literary study that it now constitutes a historiographical sub-discipline of its own in the field.

It used to be easy to say that Shakespeare was, arguably, the pre-eminent author in the literary field. And the argument was over nominees to the position (was Shakespeare pre-eminent or Dante?) rather than over the process by which nominations were established, judged or appealed. And nobody was arguing over the idea that a pre-eminent author served real interests, including the interests of the author (or, more to the point, his publisher) and the interests of the literary critics doing the nominating. Like the Academy Awards, the canonising of 'great authors' can be seen as a marketing tool. But, luckier than the Academy Award judges who can only consider the annual crop of movies, agents in the literary field have the opportunity to reconsider and indeed resurrect older texts that may have been missed the first time around. A good example of this involves the reconstruction of 'Australian women's writing,' the subject of Chapter Five.

In the process by which Shakespeare has been revisited he has not simply been re-evaluated but reconstructed in the terms of the day. This gradual process has constructed, for example, a psychologically expressive Shakespeare who expresses his individual identity in his works, or more recently a subversive Shakespeare – perhaps 'Shakespeare Caliban' – who expresses and supposedly represents the experiences of repressed minorities. By examining the way Shakespeare is constructed my aim here is to try to uncover some of the historical processes which have created the particular power of the author as a personality and which continue to determine how people read, think and talk about books in general and 'literature' in particular.

Like the history of copyright, the history of Shakespeare as an institution concerns the conditions which made and continue to make

'Shakespeare' the author (or dramatist/poet), 'Shakespearean texts' and the group and chronology of texts which make up 'the Works of Shakespeare' or, even better, 'the Shakespeare canon.' What we do with the construction called Shakespeare is as much a set of historically contingent and more or less durably instituted practices as those more obviously constructed legal and political practices which underwrite the copyright protection assigned to 'the author.' That is, even while and partly because they appear to be natural social facts which are 'just there,' 'the author,' 'the works,' and 'the canon' are, like copyright, equally notional, historically particular ways of controlling the stakes in the literary field and equally in need of the sorts of specific maintenance procedures which institutions provide. In order to illustrate this I'd like to survey some 'New Historicist' studies of Shakespeare which describe the historical emergence of Shakespeare as the paradigmatic canonical author and which provide a detailed account of some of the maintenance procedures by which the canonical Shakespeare has endured.<sup>41</sup>

I am not concerned here with 'Shakespeare' as a psychological individual, that identity which literary critics sometimes extrapolate from texts (where the texts are thought to be expressive residues or traces of that individual) because the texts themselves are always the product of publishing and editing practices which have constructed and continue to construct what 'Shakespeare' refers to in the first place. That is, I am really concerned with 'Shakespeare' as a textual phenomenon, with the ways in which 'Shakespearean texts' are maintained and the reasons why some texts are presumed in some instances to be the expressive trace of the psychological individuality of Shakespeare as an originating and supposedly original author.

The 'Shakespearean text' refers, on the face of it, to those editions which bear the name of a publisher: the Cambridge, Oxford, Penguin, Signet, Arden Shakespeare, and so on. These texts can be traced back to the earliest extant Folio or quarto texts which, we might presume, were printed from those manuscript copies closest to Shakespeare's original. On the face of it, in other words, a direct line of descent appears to link the contemporary standard paperback copy back to the earliest printed copies and then back some more to the manuscript and, through this, to the mind of Shakespeare. After all, writers write manuscripts which are

published by means of printing copies based on those manuscripts. But when we conceive of the 'Shakespearean text' in this way we are merely using our own particular, contemporary conditions of textual production as a universal paradigm for the relation between all writers and texts. Yet the multiple versions of Shakespearean texts, from the standard paperbacks available in bookshops through to the quarto and Folio versions in public and private libraries, indicate both the volatility of the text and the institutional activity needed to shore up the text of, say, *The Cambridge, Oxford, Penguin, Signet, Arden Shakespeare Macbeth*, as a fixed entity. One such activity can be traced in the way the name of the author and the name of the publisher are used. More than any other name in the cultural field Shakespeare is tagged with a publisher in a relationship of reciprocal authorising. *The Penguin Shakespeare Macbeth*, for example, lends the publishing weight of Penguin to the particular textual mutation called *Macbeth*. At the same time, Penguin receives the institutional prestige of association with the Great Author (and the RSC). The claim in titling *The Penguin Shakespeare Macbeth* calls on the singular authorising status of Shakespeare (and not, for example, Thomas Middleton who in all probability collaborated on the project) and the singular textual possibility of the text called *Macbeth*.<sup>42</sup>

But more is going on here. *The Penguin Shakespeare Macbeth* betrays the multiplicity of textual variants, acknowledging the fact that there are alternative standard (Cambridge, Oxford, Signet, Arden) *Macbeths* while laying claim to the last word as the final, most authoritative version of such multiple possibilities. Such standard-and-varying texts as *The Penguin Shakespeare Macbeth* rely on an appeal to an imaginary textual original, as though the text is based on the least corrupted quarto or Folio versions or mixtures of them and, behind these, on the presumed original manuscript. Indeed the very notion of the 'corrupt' text internalises in the actual miscellany of received Folio and quarto copies the virtual and as yet undiscovered existence of the presumed original manuscript of the 'pure' text which would serve as a standard in the process of verifying the authority of any particular text. And, given that the 'pure' text is supposed to be potentially but not yet actually available, the 'least corrupted' version, the one closest to the

mythical 'pure' text, becomes the best possible text in the circumstances. But seventeenth-century printing practices were such that there is no way of determining which early mutations might have been closest to any original manuscript. Because compositors read proof in a highly variable way as they worked, revising some sheets after unrevised ones had already been printed, there is no consistent, standard quarto or Folio text of any play, that is, no way of measuring the 'corruption' of any version. And comparing the extant copies of 'the same' quarto or Folio edition cannot establish a standard because, firstly, the surviving copies do not represent a spread of all the copies originally printed from which a pure version could be mixed and matched and, secondly, it is unlikely that there was any single original manuscript to begin with.<sup>43</sup>

The conditions in which the printed plays of Shakespeare emerged and the gap between the first printing of various plays and the later 'Works of Shakespeare' are instructive in showing how problematic, and how well naturalised, is our notion of the text. When Shakespeare or others engaged to have the plays published, his manuscript held no special authority, indeed, we cannot be sure that 'his manuscript' even existed. The source or sources for the printed version may have been derived from one or several manuscripts written by Shakespeare or copied from the originals or original bits of Shakespeare or Shakespeare and his collaborators, or from copies provided by the owners of the performance rights to a particular copy, that is, the owners of the prompt copy, a copy which was subject to the modifications and reworking which might result from producing the play, or from a transcript from a performance, or from copies registered as entitled publishing property with the London Stationers, or from a mixture of these. Further, the particular copy chosen for printing may have related to one particularly successful but atypical theatrical production.

If the first publication of a play was subject to such variation, the process of collecting the plays of Shakespeare, the 1623 First Folio, led to an even more complex text. Margreta de Grazia describes the radical inconsistency of the actual artefacts that are described, as though a coherent object, as 'The First Folio.' Irregularities in the typeface, in spelling and punctuation, in act and scene division, in line arrangement, in pagination, in ornamentation, in spacing to define titles of plays, stage di-

rections and act and scene divisions, in the listing of *dramatis personae*, in speech prefixes and in the degree of proof correction mean, she argues, that no typical First Folio actually exists (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 15-18). That the paradigmatic First Folio does, however, exist in fact is a result of the editorial need to produce one. Charlton Hinman's *The Norton Facsimile: First Folio of Shakespeare* represents the theoretical entity of the 'original First Folio.' Yet, as de Grazia notes, the original First Folio never existed: Hinman's version is the result of a way of thinking which is only possible because of later modes of uniform work practices and mechanical reproduction (18) and because we conceive of the text as the uniform expressive representation of the writer.

The First Folio was not, however, the simple collection of the extant copies of the plays of Shakespeare:

[h]alf of the plays ... collected [by Heminge and Condell, the supervisors of the publication,] had been printed and of those several had been reprinted. The other half, it must be assumed, existed in the form of authorial manuscripts ..., scribal transcripts, or prompt-book copies used for performance, or combinations of the three .... While the unprinted plays were presumably the property of the acting company, the printed plays were variously assigned by the Stationers' Register and by the individual quarto imprints: the rights to one play had never been established, those to two others had reverted to the Stationers' Company, six belonged to the syndicate of four named on the imprint and colophon, and the remainder were distributed among six independent publishers .... Like the plays that had never been printed, the quarto plays also bore various relations to what the author had penned, having undergone different amounts of theatrical cutting, interpolation, abridgment, censorship, revision, as well as scribal, compositorial, and proof-readers' modification – some accidental and others purposeful ... [and] collaboration .... With such diverse and complex backgrounds, the plays collected by Heminge and Condell needed a strong

principle of unification to authorise their enclosure in one massive book. (30-31)

The apparatus that does this involves the very physical format of the volume. The respectable, monumental, expensive and durable folio format was intended for preservation, and thus signified that the contents merited preservation. But folio publication was usually reserved for classics or serious works, not plays (32). In order to suggest the proper credentials of the plays of Shakespeare for such treatment, the First Folio apparatus produces an engraving, epistle, address, commendatory poems and the strategic dedication of the publication to Pembroke and Montgomery, 'Both Knights of the most Noble order of the Garter, and our singular good Lords' (quoted in de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 37-38). In doing this, the apparatus stakes a claim to the importance of this particular publication and its author by virtue of associating this volume with previous folio volumes and with other agents or institutions with social and specifically literary standing. But the unification of the plays *depends* on the centralising of the author. The commendatory poems in particular lay claim to the relation between the bibliographical volume and the biological individual called Shakespeare. 'All four commemorative verses allude to that dead body or corpse, ... confined and stationed till doomsday but superseded by the perpetuating issue of the Folio tome' (41). The apparatus retrospectively constructs Shakespeare as the single, originating individual in order to title the volume and entitle it as a coherent collection of otherwise miscellaneous items under the homogenising name, 'Shakespeare.'<sup>44</sup>

The generation of 'Shakespeare's plays' after the publication of the First Folio is highly dependent on such collectivising practices of the First Folio. What we now call 3 *Henry VI*, for example, follows from the First Folio rather than the quarto title page, 'The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke.'<sup>45</sup> Even more, in order to reaffirm the coherence of the plays as a whole the title page in the First Folio suppresses the usual quarto title page information indicating the previous printing, selling and performance of the text. Most importantly, what the Folio elevates in its appa-

ratus, the centrality of Shakespeare to the play, is usually subordinated in the quartos to the acting company and information about performance, marketing information that promoted the publication in the same way that reissues of books 'tie-in' to the exposure already generated by films 'based on' the book. The naming of the writer was, in the quartos, usually subordinated to all the other marketing information. The only quarto exception regarding the prominence of Shakespeare's name, as Peter Stallybrass notes, is the 1608 *King Lear*:

M. William Shak-speare

*HIS*

True Chronicle Historie of the life and  
death of King LEAR and his three

Daughters

But the elevation of the name 'Shakespeare' in this instance, according to Stallybrass, is not intended to valorise Shakespeare as author but to distinguish this play from the *Leir* which had been published in 1605 (Stallybrass, 'Shakespeare, the Individual, and the Text,' 597). Further, while Shakespeare's name was of use in making such a distinction this was not because his status as author was established but because he occupied a position of centrality with regard to all aspects of the theatrical production. Given that Shakespeare 'was in the unusual position of being an actor and shareholder in his own company, he had an unusually full role in the collaborative process: he would have economic interests in the choosing of a topic, in the theatrical revisions, and so on' (597). 'Shakespeare,' in other words, was one marketable name among other recognisable kinds of brand name, in Shakespeare's case deployed in order to strengthen the associations between the particular publication and previous theatrical productions associated with the company with which he was involved.<sup>46</sup>

If the First Folio constructs the individuated *Mr William Shakespeares. Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, subsequent editions construct a further elaborated identity as well as the notion of the *Works* of Shakespeare. And it is the idea of the Works of Shakespeare that makes possible the canonical treatment of the plays. The transformation of the coherent First, Second, Third and Fourth Folios into the increasingly unified Shakespeare editions with named editors (Rowe

(1709, twice, and 1714), Pope (1725 and 1728), Theobald (1733, 1740, 1752, 1757 and 1762), Hanmer (1745, 1747, twice, 1748, 1751 and 1760) Warburton (1747), Johnson (1765, twice, and 1768), Steevens (*Twenty Quartos*, 1766) and Capell (1767)) was a process by which a new institution, the works, was created.<sup>47</sup> The durability of the works is the product of authorising. But the power of Shakespeare as an authorising figure depends on the particular conditions in which the editions listed above were produced. All of the editions were initiated by the Tonson publishing house who used an already tested marketing strategy.

By ... associating a particular reprint with a well-known contemporary writer, Tonson ... milked the [writer's] reputation as ... [the] editor ... But in Shakespeare's case, because of the longevity of the Tonsons' influence this strategy produced a string of editions inextricably associated with the dramatis personae of eighteenth-century English literature .... [F]or over a century the finest practitioners of the English language, from Dryden to Pope to Johnson, contributed to the public remodelling and transmission of Shakespeare's plays ... By the end of the eighteenth century Shakespeare had been, by such means, insinuated into the network of English literature. (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 71)

Even more, the Tonson publications of Shakespeare were associated with the cultural elite, no more clearly than in Pope's edition in which 'The Names of the Subscribers' are printed just before the plays, according to rank, from the king down (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 197). Tonson publications aimed to profit by association with prestigious literary collections, emphasised by the honorific *Works* in the title of collections besides their Shakespeares, from Virgil and Ovid to Abraham Cowley, Milton, Matthew Prior, Sir John Denham, Sir John Suckling, Congreve, Beaumont and Fletcher, Waller, Otway and Spenser (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 69). The pre-eminent marketability of Shakespeare is, however, clearly evident in the decision to use the image of Shakespeare from the pedigreed Tonson Works of Shakespeare as the Tonson house-mark (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 81).



The practice of editorial succession was, however, more than a marketing strategy. When the authorial work was edited it was appropriated by the new, secondary work, becoming the property of the editor and publisher because it had been 'infus[ed] ... with [the editor's] emendations, illustrations, and evaluations' (195). Such a process of 'overwriting' acted as a kind of de facto copyright that could be enjoined even when the statutory limitation on the primary text had elapsed, a fact that was especially useful for the sort of publisher like Tonson who virtually owned the rights to Shakespeare by virtue of taking his publishing rivals to court over copyright disputes (195) and by paying out the contracted editors for their often anonymous labour (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 71 and 139, de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 201).

Editorial succession did more than *protect* Shakespeare as Tonson property, it constructed the text that bore the Shakespearean title. Each new Tonson edition appeared in a format with a text, biography and authorial portrait inherited from its predecessor (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 193) but, more importantly, each new editor received the interleaved copy of his immediate predecessor, made his changes on the predecessor's copy-text and added his own new notes on the interleaved pages (201). This practice ensured the continuity of the text from one edition to the next based on the further revision of the latest, that is, the most mediated version (52). Even where the new editor produced some innovation in the text, an innovation made necessary by the function of the new edition in superseding the previous one (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 72-73), the new edition remained fundamentally conservative. The editorial decision to retain or reject the previous editorial emendation of, say, an archaic word or phrase or a supposed error by a compositor, or an altered or reassigned stretch of dialogue, or the provision of uniform speech prefixes served to construct the text by a process of accretion. Each editorial decision to retain or reject previous emendations is tied to the latest version and at best the one before that. In such a process the *authenticity* of the text, its relation to the earliest known sources, is not an issue.

Margreta de Grazia's project is to demonstrate precisely how radical is the shift in editorial practice that began with Edmond Malone's

*The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. Malone's insistence on collating the authentic (earliest known) copies of Shakespeare's plays introduced a new method for constructing Shakespeare. By insisting on authenticity Malone privileged documentary sources and discredited the practice of editorial succession which had ensured such profits for the Tonson publishing house. But the privileging of documentation also reconstructed Shakespeare in a new way. Malone's documented biography of Shakespeare, his chronology of the plays and his edition of the sonnets created a new version of Shakespeare in which the author becomes the psychological individual discernible in the traces of his texts (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 134, Stallybrass, 'Shakespeare, the Individual, and the Text,' 596). Malone's method was to sift archival materials in order to establish the Shakespearean biographical record and source materials for the plays and then cross reference these with the plays. The method supposes that a consistent individual read and was influenced by particular texts in a coherent way. It postulates, that is, that Shakespeare's personal experience was recorded and could be detected in the plays (de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 144). And, once ordered as a temporal sequence, '[t]he chronology provided more than a way of identifying isolated memories, feelings, and thoughts; it provided a temporal structure by which to organise not only the plays but the lifetime in which they had been written' (145).

Malone's method in authenticating the sonnets most clearly illustrates the self-contained assumptions with which he began his project: Malone conceived of the author as an individual whose consistent and psychologically understandable being was discernible in his textual traces. Accordingly, any cross-referenced similarities between the sonnets and the plays became proof of the authenticity of the sonnets, thus drawing the sonnets into the canon. The method presupposes that Shakespeare – the historically documented entity who is recorded on parish rolls and as the principal figure associated with some performed and published plays – also occupies the first-person pronoun position in the anonymous narrative of the sonnets. The sonnets thus become, for Malone as well as for following critics, a biographical record of Shakespeare in which he reflects on his own psychological condition

(152-59). The text becomes, after Malone, the trace of the author, and *of the author alone*.

Shakespeare or any other author considered as the individual, originating psychologically motivated personality behind the text who is expressed through the text is a particular, historically contingent product of the forces operating in the field of cultural production. The degree to which the canonical Shakespeare developed as such a historically contingent product is clearly evident in, for example, the combination of factors which enabled the Tonson publishing firm to construct the collection of texts they called 'The Works of Shakespeare' as property. The possibility of establishing the authority of those Works depended on such contingent factors as: agreement between publishers on the conventions which controlled the registration of rights to the copying of a text; the persistence of case law agreement with the Tonson claim to perpetual copyright even after the Statute of Anne proclaimed the limitation of copyright protection; the rise of the belief in the autonomous individual; the parallel rise of individuated reading practices and a growing book market; the rise of 'the man of letters' as an editorial authority in the eighteenth century; the position of editors as contracted labourers subject to Tonson control; and the capacity of the Tonsons to collect, retain and institutionalise the previously diffused publishing rights to Shakespeare's plays and poems for three quarters of a century.

The machinery which maintains the centralising, originating author, then, protects the text as a property in the interests of publishers. But also, and perhaps inadvertently, it encourages the protection of living authors who saw in 'the more profound conceptions of literary property rights ... [– that is, in] concepts which regard an author's work as the expression of a free moral personality' – an opportunity to protect their supposed individual labour.<sup>48</sup> Such an individual originating author whom we may consider as a natural fact in the production of a text is, after all, the product of the confluence of contingent practices which served then and still serve now to protect the interests of some agents more than others in the field of cultural production. This author, as I have tried to show in the case of Shakespeare, is a construction which depends on the suppression of the practices which get him or her

up and running in the first place. Shakespeare the natural genius, the expressive individual or the subversive – rather than his theatrical and textual collaborators, publishers and editors – appears to be the underlying wellspring of production, and such a wellspring that the critic need only understand *him* to understand the plays.

It used to be thought that the reason some writers, like Shakespeare, get to be authors or great and enduringly great authors was because they just are better than others. But, as I have tried to show, the conditions which privilege and reward agents who can claim to be, or have been posthumously claimed to be, such individual, originating authors depend on the historically particular interests and contests of agents in the field of cultural production.<sup>49</sup> Some of these agents are and have been writers, but the definition and possession of the stakes in the field is not exclusively their province. What counts and who gets to play in the field of cultural production depends on such historically constructed ways of thinking about or handling texts as copyright, the individuated ownership of intellectual property, the text as the trace or residue of a psychological individual available for interrogation, censorship, praise or censure. What counts and who gets to play depends on the way writers deploy their resources according to such ways of thinking about or handling texts and on how such notions operate over time in the hands or minds of such users of texts as lawyers, critics, editors, pedagogues, publishers, and so on. It is because such notions govern the cultural field that it was possible to imagine, as Leavis did, that authors have always and only been unproblematic objects which can simply be measured and compared to decide which ones are the best. At the same time, it is because the cultural field operates in the way that it does, and especially because Shakespeare occupies such a significant position in its historical development, that the attempt to validate a judgement of Shakespeare – or any other writer – as the best is impossible. The contemporary cultural field, as a result, is an interesting one: judgements about authors by agents in the field is at best problematic and at worst impossible yet at the same time agents operate in the field as though this were not the case. This is because the historically particular shape of the field of cultural production and the roles that are possible in it are enduring ones which is a consequence of the institution-

alised nature of the ways of thinking, feeling and acting which 'just are the way things are done' in the field. And how institutions operate to maintain 'the way things are done' in the field of cultural production is the subject of the next chapter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs*. Trans. David B. Allison. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>3</sup> It would be worth examining the rise of the authorising and authenticating use of the author, although we would need to be cautious in using dictionaries (even the *Oxford English Dictionary*, despite its construction on historical principles). Dictionaries may record but also submerge the processes by which words and usage are at stake in political struggles.

<sup>4</sup> The definitions are taken from *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971, 143 (569-72 of *The Complete Oxford English Dictionary*). The originality required in order to be counted as an OED author is a matter of some interest. See below, 21.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in my text I attempt to garner as much authority as I can by nominalising my syntax (reducing the number of verb forms by forming noun-clusters) and by using such rhetorical triggers as 'of course,' 'in fact.' And I spill the beans in a footnote in order not to foreground my stylistic strategies.

<sup>6</sup> See Walter Benjamin, 'Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' quoted in Rosalind E. Krauss, 'The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths' in *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge: MIT, 1986, 152.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Orders of Discourse,' in Scott Lash, ed. *Post-Structuralist and Post-Modernist Sociology*. London: Elgar, 1991, 8 and 22. See Chapter One above, 27.

<sup>8</sup> And takes Foucault to task for his allegedly over-textual bias: see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 33 and 179.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Polity, 1991, 229-31, emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> Bourdieu would argue that the disposition to act in certain ways in certain fields is not a subjective characteristic of an individual but an objective characteristic of his or her inculcated *habitus*, which is objective because it is the product of those positions which are possible in the field. See note 8 above.

<sup>11</sup> Steven Connor proposes a more convincing synthesis of the absolute/relative, universal/particular, essential/historical, subjective/objective opposition in his analysis of value. The process of valuing, he argues, is extremely reflexive, despite evaluation being a universal practice, because valuing also involves evaluating values. Value is, then, both relative (oriented towards but always deferring the arrival of ultimate value) and universal. See Steven Connor, *Theory and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

<sup>12</sup> It is a serious problem for Bourdieu because he seeks to produce an all-embracing theory of social action in which fields are the real constructs of objective conditions including the *habitus*-induced interactions of individuals who comprise the membership of fields and thereby constitute fields. If the field is constituted by individuals in such a way then the field must always exist in some way in the consciousness of those individuals and not just in the mind of the social theorist. Clearly this is absurd. Individuals operate in specific, local ways which might be seen systematically or can be *shown* to be systematic but need not be seen systematically by the practising individual for that practice to be possible. Richard Jenkins points out that the basic problem in Bourdieu's conception of field is that at some times it is a description of social reality and at other times an analytical model. See Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, 1992, 89. Vincent Crapanzano discusses the problem of the theorist's (or ethnographer's) construction of the analytical model as a social reality in 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description,' in James Clifford

---

and George E. Marcus, eds *Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986.

<sup>13</sup> The phrase is adapted from Craig Calhoun in his discussion of historical specificity in Bourdieu's theory of fields. Calhoun takes Bourdieu to task for problems in the theory to do with the tendency to universality or the trans-historical view, but accepts the analytical usefulness of the concept of capital itself. See Craig Calhoun, 'Habitus, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity,' in Craig Calhoun, Edward Li Puma and Moishe Postone, eds *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 69-70.

<sup>14</sup> Capital becomes 'the aggregate chances of profit in all games in which ... capital is effective.' See Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 230.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 276, note 44 ; John B. Thompson, 'Editor's Introduction,' *Language and Symbolic Power*, 14.

<sup>16</sup> On the cashing-in of educational qualifications for jobs see Pierre Bourdieu and Luc Boltanski, 'Formal Qualifications and Occupational Hierarchies: The Relationship Between the Production System and the Reproduction System,' in Edmund J. King, ed. *Reorganising Education: Management and Participation for Change*. London: Sage, 1977, 60-9.

<sup>17</sup> John Frow makes this point in his critique of Bourdieu's cash-in model. See John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995, 39-40.

<sup>18</sup> This point is made by John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*, 43-4.

<sup>19</sup> See Edward Li Puma, 'Culture and the Concept of Culture in a Theory of Practice,' in Calhoun, Li Puma and Postone, eds *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Routledge, 1984, 56.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu and Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Sage, 1992, xiii.

<sup>22</sup> The point is made by Richard Jenkins in *Pierre Bourdieu*, 114-15.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>24</sup> Legal theorists have also initiated several analyses dealing with the status of the originating artist, as a result of problematic copyright interpretations of post-modern appropriative art, collaborative writing practices and of difficulties in the protection of software design. See Lynne A. Greenberg, 'The Art of Appropriation: Puppies, Piracy, and Post-Modernism,' *Cardozo Arts Entertainment Law Journal*, 1992 (11) 1, 1-33. For an account of the legal ramifications of collaboration see Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede, 'Collaborative Authorship and the Teaching of Writing,' in Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds *The Constitution of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994.

<sup>25</sup> Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.

<sup>26</sup> See Morris Weitz, ed. *Problems in Aesthetics: An Introductory Book of Readings*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.

<sup>27</sup> See Margreta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991, 7-9, especially for a discussion of Locke's theory of property; and Peter Stallybrass, 'Shakespeare, the Individual, and the Text,' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, eds *Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London, 1992, 595-96.

<sup>28</sup> The terms are Schiller's, quoted in Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 29.

<sup>29</sup> William Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface,' in Paul M. Zall, ed. *Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1966, 182 and 184, quoted in Martha Woodmansee, *The Author and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994, 38.

- <sup>30</sup> Compare the Impressionist emphasis on 'instantaneity' developed by Monet. The apparently spontaneous canvas is an interesting manifestation in the visual arts of the way originality might be contrived. For a description of Monet's calculated spontaneity – supposedly a hallmark of creative originality – see Kevin Brophy, *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing*. Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1998, 13-4.
- <sup>31</sup> This is Martha Woodmansee's definition. See Martha Woodmansee, 'On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity,' in Woodmansee and Jaszi, eds *The Constitution of Authorship*, 27-8.
- <sup>32</sup> See David Saunders, *Authorship and Copyright*. London: Routledge, 1992, 7.
- <sup>33</sup> See Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993, 29-30.
- <sup>34</sup> Saunders questions the tendency in Rose's account to 'presume that the historical mission of the law of copyright was to recognise and protect authorial consciousness' (221). For a critique of Rose's account see Saunders, 221-23.
- <sup>35</sup> See Peter Jaszi, 'On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity,' in Woodmansee and Jaszi, eds *The Constitution of Authorship*, 34.
- <sup>36</sup> See de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 185-86.
- <sup>37</sup> Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*. Leeds: Scolar, 1966.
- <sup>38</sup> See Rose, 121-23; Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 39-54.
- <sup>39</sup> Australian copyright law recognises corporate writers but only individual printed works. Copyright law recognises divided ownership rights in non-print musical works, films, photography and computer programs. See Jill McKeough and Andrew Stewart, *Intellectual Property in Australia*. Sydney: Butterworths, 1997, and Peter Jaszi, 'On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity,' in Woodmansee and Jaszi, eds *The Constitution of Authorship*, 32-8.
- <sup>40</sup> Woodmansee notes how the creation of new reading practices follows from the idea of seeing the text as a window into the writer's consciousness. See *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 55.
- <sup>41</sup> For an account of the construction of a twentieth-century author see John Rodden's somewhat unresolved analysis of the construction of George Orwell in *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. Rodden's project is to account for those factors in the critical reception of Orwell's texts which promoted his reputation while, problematically, also insisting that 'intrinsic, sometimes indefinable, aesthetic attributes of works contribute to authors' reputations' (ix).
- <sup>42</sup> See Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History From the Restoration to the Present*. London: Hogarth, 1990, 402, 408-09.
- <sup>43</sup> In *The First Folio of Shakespeare* Charlton Hinman attempts precisely to mix and match various Folio versions. See *The Norton Facsimile: First Folio of Shakespeare*. New York: Norton, 1968. For a description of the methods used by seventeenth-century compositors see de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 17-8.
- <sup>44</sup> And the rules of the literary field continue to operate in the same way, as Andrew Wernick notes in his analysis of the use of the name of the author. Wernick identifies four moments in such use: (1) the composition of the 'name,' that is, the identity and social standing of the writer; (2) the promotional cashing-in of this composed name; (3) the detachment of this name from the individual and its reattachment to other individuals and products; and (4) the general promotional circulation of the name. The career of 'Helen Demidenko' clearly illustrates the process by which the name moves from a biological entity (who calls or called herself Helen Demidenko) to the promotional name taken up and used to sell other media products. See Andrew Wernick, 'Authorship and the supplement of promotion,' in Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller, eds *What Is An Author?* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993, 85-103.



---

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Peter Stallybrass, 'Shakespeare, the Individual, and the Text,' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler eds *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992, 596.

<sup>46</sup> Margreta de Grazia also makes this point. See de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 89-90.

<sup>47</sup> Various listed by de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 200, and Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 70.

<sup>48</sup> Karl Gutzkow, 'Über Preisherabsetzungen im Buchhandel,' quoted in Russell A. Berman, 'Writing for the Book Industry: The Writer in Organised Capital,' in Russell Berman, *Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics, and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989, 59.

<sup>49</sup> For an examination of the conditions in which 'authors' are able to market 'their' commodities in their own self-interest see Andrew Wernick, 'Authorship and the Supplement of Promotion,' in Biriotti and Miller, eds *What Is An Author?*

# 3

## **Institutions of the culture industry in the field of cultural production**

We need to see authors and readers as only two elements in a much larger network which includes critics and reviewers; journalists, editors and publishers; academics and teachers; literary magazines and newspaper review pages; advertising and marketing practices; printing technologies; and curricula in universities and schools.

David Carter and Gillian Whitlock<sup>1</sup>

Writing and reading books are institutional practices. And the agents who have since the eighteenth century been credited in western culture with the central place in this cultural production have, as I tried to show in the last chapter, continued to occupy this position by virtue of institutions which foreground writing as a product of the originary genius of the individual, autonomous and copyright-owning author. Authors, that is, are products of historically particular social practices which apply in the field of cultural production; and they occupy a social position which has been reasonably durable because the chronically recurring commercial and pedagogical practices embedded in institutional behaviour continue to have a hand in the consecration of the individuals who achieve the name 'author' and in the initial production and subsequent valorising of particular 'literary' texts. It is these chronically recurring commercial and pedagogical practices which will be the subject of my attention in this chapter.

By 'institution' I mean those 'hard' social practices that are strongly sanctioned and codified in the legal, bureaucratic and financial constructs of the organised state. But I also mean those apparently trivial 'soft' social practices which direct our everyday be-

haviour that are weakly sanctioned because deeply sedimented in the typical and habitual ways in which social agents think, feel and act.<sup>2</sup> In using the term 'institutional practices' I mean practices which exercise the 'capacities that individuals possess as a result of their *position in a social organisation*.'<sup>3</sup> For example:

if two men fight solely for the possession of a piece of food, the fighting involves only the exercise of individual powers. If, however, two men fight to win a laurel wreath, they are engaging in a contest and not only are individual powers being exercised, the men are participating in social or institutional behaviour. Fighting may be simply an individual activity or it may be an institutional activity, depending upon how the participants understand their behaviour. (Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic*, 79-80)

Institutional practices such as fighting for a laurel wreath, then, depend upon the perceptions of the participants which may result from a more or less institutionally soft, deeply sedimented understanding of the practice, but also upon the more or less institutionally hard, explicitly organised structures which determine, say, the rules, arenas, system of scoring, appointing of judges, and so on, particular to wrestling, which maintain the practice by means of potentially strong sanctions, such as the sanction against running away from one's wrestling opponent. Similarly, the institutions which regulate the practices underpinning cultural production can be described as being both soft and hard, constructing and maintaining the perception and prestige of the 'supply-side' agents involved in the field (writers, publishers, reviewers, school and academic course writers and teachers, and so on), the actual cultural artefacts (the books themselves) and the readers who read (and reconstruct) them.

The fact that the cultural productions of social agents result from more or less soft and more or less hard institutional practices explains why it is that the historically contingent possibilities that have emerged in the field of cultural production, such as the possibility of laying claim to the status of the autonomous, originary and copyright-owning author, tend to endure long after the battles have been lost and won. Agents operate according to both the weakly and strongly sanctioned institutions that organise the positions and possible moves in the field and according to the weak and strong sanc-

tions which control the way various cultural artefacts like, say, canonical texts, airport fiction or newspapers may be used.

### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**

The institutional regulation of behaviour has been of considerable interest to philosophers of language and art, whose theories provide some analytical leverage in helping us to prize open the mechanisms by which institutions regulate our social and cultural practices. John Austin's original theory of speech acts, for example, has been deployed in a variety of more and less satisfactory ways in a range of literary and cultural theories but is most useful for my purposes in showing how institutions operate in both strongly and weakly sanctioned ways at the same time.<sup>4</sup> Austin's method is to analyse the conditions in which language can be said to 'do things.' His argument is that some utterances are *descriptive* while others, like interrogative, declarative and imperative utterances, are *performative*. A performative utterance is one in which the uttering of 'the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.'<sup>5</sup> That is, 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action' (Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 6). Pierre Bourdieu takes up Austin's theory in order to situate the performative utterance in its social context, that is, to show how Austin's performative utterance is *dependent* on the context in which it occurs.

The limiting case of the performative utterance is the legal act which, when it is pronounced, as it should be, by someone who has the right to do so, [that is,] by an agent acting on behalf of a whole group, can replace action with speech ...: the judge need say no more than 'I find you guilty' because there is a set of agents and institutions which guarantee that the sentence will be executed.

(Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 75)

Bourdieu's limiting case seeks to explain the 'appropriate circumstances' which, for Austin, are necessary to the 'felicity' or efficacy of the utterance (Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 8-9). But Bourdieu misses the point here and betrays a single-mindedly hard definition of institutions whose origins and maintenance, having been shifted to the status of preconditions, he cannot now explain.

Austin's theory attempts to show how conventional practices are *instituted in and by their use*. The issuing of a promise, for example, is at the same time an utterance and a promise which both practises and maintains the institution of promising or, to use Bourdieu's terms, the 'right to promise.' For Austin, the performative utterance is effective when it is pronounced by someone who is believed by the receiver. When, for example, I say 'I promise' the act of promising is effective, executed in so far as my listener believes in my promise, which is partly the result of my saying 'I promise' and partly of characteristics to do with my listener's perception of me (his or her knowledge of my history in relation to promises, my current status, the nature of the relationship) and to do with the possibility of my fulfilment of the promise which depends on the situation in which the promise is made. To promise, in other words, is institutionalised and institutionalising, created out of and creating social practices which enable ongoing behaviour, not simply the result (although often the result) of previously given socially coded or legislated practices.

Austin's theory shows the construction of the institution in its everyday use. Bourdieu reverses the method. For him, the performative utterance does not construct but merely follows from the appropriate circumstances (for example, the institution of finding guilt follows from already being a judge, rather than the other way around).<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu conceives of institutions as constituting the basis for legitimate social practice 'by instituting [the agent] as a medium between the group and the social world' (Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 75) but fails, curiously, to see institutions as being produced *in* the agent when the agent is speaking for him or herself. Rather than the power of the institution being constructed in its use by various agents, for Bourdieu the use reflects only the power of the group delegated in an authorised representative, and how this authority is legitimised remains unspecified and problematically unspecifiable.

Austin's theory of speech acts, on the other hand, demonstrates how both soft and hard institutions are maintained by linguistic practices in everyday circumstances. His emphasis on the everyday and trivial basis of institutional action explains how institutions are produced and reproduced by means of participation in the action, whether this is the result of deeply sedimented, habitual and

weakly sanctioned behaviour or behaviour which is highly codified, explicitly regulated and strongly sanctioned.<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Wieand calls these institutions 'action institutions,' institutions which are themselves maintained by the actions which they regulate. 'Action institutions' shape both harder organisations and social structures and softer, habitually understood conventions by which we negotiate social relations.

The idea that the institutions which regulate the ways that agents act are themselves produced and reproduced out of the actions of agents is a useful one that helps to explain how institutions and agents operate in durable and regulated ways in the field of cultural production. I shall make use of it in Part Two to attempt to show how short story anthologies operate institutionally to regulate how agents conceive of categories like 'Australian fiction,' 'women's writing,' and so on. Anthology 'selections' present and represent what is considered to count – 'Australian fiction,' 'women's writing,' or whatever – in the cultural field and which writers and particular works are considered to count as worthwhile 'specimens.' Short story anthologies provide useful case studies because they reveal how practices like selecting, describing and historicising 'Australian fiction,' 'women's writing,' or whatever construct these objects and regulate the possibilities open to subsequent editors as well as to the various kinds of readers who use anthologies.

George Dickie's institutional theory of art refines the notion that institutions regulate and are regulated by agents in order to explain what characterises artistic practices and artefacts. For Dickie, the institutional theory of art stresses

the conventional matrix in which works of art are embedded and which provides the defining characteristics of art ... [, that is,] the non-exhibited characteristics that works of art have in virtue of being embedded in an institutional matrix which may be called 'the artworld' ... The institutional theory ... concentrates attention on the *practices and conventions* used in *presenting* certain aspects of works of art to their audiences and argues that the *presentational conventions* locate and isolate the aesthetic objects (features) of works of art.<sup>8</sup> (Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic*, 12, emphasis added)

The institutional theory of art, clearly, seeks to oppose an idealist or essentialist aesthetic but must also contend with the anti-essentialist view that there exists no single necessary and sufficient feature to define every form of art. Dickie, following Maurice Mandelbaum's critique of Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblance, locates the necessary and sufficient condition for art in the 'relational attributes' of artistic or cultural production, that is, in the fact that all artworks are *related* because they share presentational conventions.<sup>9</sup> Such conventions, according to the institutional theory of art, are evident in all artistic or cultural productions in that they all *present* artefacts as artistic or cultural products. Most importantly, the conventional actions involved in presenting thereby define the artefact as an artistic or cultural product. Dickie's theory is limited, however, in that he assumes that the artefact precedes the conventions of presentation which define the artefact as an artistic or cultural product. This assumption may result from his paradigmatic use of Marcel Duchamp's Dadaist ready-mades to explain the institutional basis of art, Duchamp's already-existing and merely functional urinal becoming the artistic 'Fountain' by virtue of the conventions of presenting it for exhibition. But the artefact is, more accurately, *constructed as art* in the moment or at each moment of the receiver's apprehension of it as art. In other words, the artefact is constructed as an artistic or cultural product because of the way its audience relates to it, as I shall attempt to show, later, in terms of the reader's construction of the literary text.

Despite the limitations of Dickie's theory, however, his account of cultural production helps to explain the institutional basis of cultural products in general and the literary text in particular.<sup>10</sup> Literary texts are artefacts which result from the mediation of the generally hard organisational structures and practices of publishing and distribution and the hard and soft pedagogic organisational structures and practices which determine *which* texts are read and *how* texts are read by social agents in terms of the literary author, text and canon.

In the rest of this chapter I shall consider such institutions in terms of the supply-side of production – the actual production of textual artefacts, that is, the production of books by agents like writers, publishers, and so on, and the reproduction that comes with the consecration of such artefacts and their writers as canonical texts and

authors; and in terms of the demand-side of production – the further reproduction of textual artefacts as a result of the construction of the reader and ‘literary’ ways of reading. It should be noted, however, that the method used here to describe cultural production in terms of an initial supply- and subsequent demand-side is a matter of analytical convenience which enables me to consider the various ways in which texts are produced, yet such a split distorts what is really a continuous form of production. Books are not really autonomous products delivered to virgin readers who subsequently use them, but always products that follow from the ways in which previous books have been used already, products which in turn determine subsequent books and ways of reading them.

### ***SUPPLY-SIDE INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE PRODUCTION OF TEXTS***

I don’t want to be judged on a book-by-book basis. If we are not making enough money, or no one likes us, then I am doing a bad job. If at the end of a year enough books have made themselves felt and heard, and we have come out ahead financially, everything is fine. How I get there is my business.<sup>11</sup>

On the face of it, books in general and literary fiction in particular come into being as a result of the practices of such agents in the field of cultural production as literary agents, publishers, reviewers, and so on, who mediate between the initial producers of manuscripts (writers) and the final consumers (readers). Such a view sees the mediating practitioners and practices of the book industry as a kind of gatekeeping or

sluiceway ... for ideas, deciding which [books] will be offered and what will be excluded ... sifting the chaff from the wheat and making authoritative decisions about which deserve sponsorship for distribution and which are to be kept out of circulation.<sup>12</sup> (Coser, Kadushin and Powell, *Books*, 4)

Literary agents, publishers, publicists, reviewers, and so on, certainly make decisions which make and break the careers of various writers and provide or deny them access to a variety of consumers. But the



idea that the production of texts is a simple kind of gatekeeping obscures the key institutional practices which govern the field of cultural production.

One of these key practices involves deciding what counts in the field, that is, why some manuscripts get through the gate, which is not simply a question of 'sifting the chaff from the wheat' but of deciding what constitutes wheat and chaff in the first place. Every choice by the gatekeeper is a more or less habitually instituted step in constructing and reconstructing the general typical profile for a publishable manuscript (the wheat) and a rejected one (the chaff) and the appropriateness of particular manuscripts in relation to this constructed profile. The practice in constructing 'an appropriate manuscript' depends on: the prior history of the publishing house regarding published and rejected manuscripts; the mechanisms by which manuscripts arrive on the editor's desk (directly onto the 'slush pile' or by way of a literary agent's recommendation which is, in turn, qualified by the reliability of the agent's assessments or her prior affiliation with the publishing house, and on the agent's perceived status in regard to representing profitable or prestigious writers)<sup>13</sup>; the relation between the writer and publisher (whether the manuscript is suited to the typical style of the house or imprint, whether the writer has produced reliable sales on previous titles, is new to the house or has changed from one house to another); the selling power of the writer's name, and so on. But the idea that some agents in the field of cultural production are gatekeepers rests on the presupposition that ideas already exist as a reservoir of unproblematic givens and the gatekeeper's role is merely passive, requiring only that he or she fish out the good ones. As I have tried to show in relation to the construction of the copyrightable and the Shakespearean author, those cultural products (books and authors) which gain a foothold in the field of cultural production are not pre-existing objects in the field to be netted by some benign authority called a publisher. Rather, they emerge from and are constructed out of the various victories, defeats, truces and alliances which result from the contests between competing agents.

Another key practice governing the field of cultural production which is obscured in the account of Coser, Kadushin and Powell concerns the nature of distribution and circulation implicit in the making public which characterises publishing. Coser, Kadushin and

Powell's homogenising of the publishing industry as a monolithic gatekeeping institution submerges the contests over how and how far particular texts are distributed and circulated. It takes for granted, against their own evidence, that all published texts are equal simply by virtue of being in the public domain, without analysing the vehicles used by textual producers to deliver texts to specific consumers. Where, for example, the published text relies upon a large advertising budget, author tours, television interviews and bookshop signings rather than, say, reviewing, the extent of its circulation, typically, is wider and the duration of sales shorter than for a text which relies on reviews or recommendations.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, the decision to promote a book by way of reviews *defines* the text as 'literary' and not 'popular,' 'popular' books, typically, depending on pre-publicity which reaches booksellers before reviews appear. So far as Coser, Kadushin and Powell are concerned, however, the causal relation is one in which, '[i]f the book is a literary work, *then* the public relations department attempts to get literary opinion leaders and makers to endorse the book. Getting reviewed in the right places is part of this process' (213, emphasis added) and such reviewing is central only to the *marketing* of the unproblematically defined 'quality work' of 'serious' 'intellectual or literary merit' (the terms appear on pages 10, 221, 308, 331). But the relation between text and review is more complex than this suggests.

The decision by, say, a publishing editor to pitch a book as a literary one determines her choice to review (including the attempt to place the book with newspapers, pre-publication trade magazines or literary magazines which are perceived to have high status in the literary field) but is in turn determined by the book being taken up and reviewed as a literary one.<sup>15</sup> And how reviewers review is, of course, determined by institutional practices. The reviews editor, for example, indicates by his matching of titles to reviewers and by the amount of line space he makes available to the reviewer how he expects each book to be treated. The review, further, is predetermined by its intended audience. A review in the *New York Review of Books*, for example, will reach a small, self-consciously highbrow audience and any reviewer will be selected for and will critique particular books on the basis of being familiar to such an audience and of having a familiarity with the 'literature' that it consumes. But in so far as editors and publishers of review magazines perceive the

role of reviewing as directing the market, reviewers also assume a cultural authority in order to construct the terms of debate about literature. Publications of the *Australian Bookseller and Publisher*, for example, sought in the 1930s to direct the book-selling and -buying market by developing the 'Bookchat' and later 'All About Books' inserts. Such inserts defined the terms of, for example, the debate on 'Australian literature' in the early 1930s, and thereby helped to construct the initial market for Australian literature and the later academic discipline that studied it.<sup>16</sup>

Independent bookshops, which tend to offer strong support for locally produced books, rely on the kind of review publicity which defines what gets to be called 'literary,' largely because they tend not to possess the kind of advertising budget typical of the large book chains. As a result, reviews of Australian books, which have a significant influence on independent bookshop sales, also have some influence over the construction of the category, 'Australian literature.'<sup>17</sup> In other words, the practice of reviewing helps to construct kinds of books, the degree of distribution likely for books, and the category of 'literature' itself. There is, of course, more to the construction of 'literature' than this. And how the initial determination by reviewers of the book as a literary one is pursued by other agents and organisations like literary critics, teachers and curriculum writers in the field of cultural production shall be considered a little later.

For the moment, and having confined my analysis to the supply-side production of books, there is still a clear case that there are agents other than individual writers who are more or less involved in what might be called the primary production of texts as material objects, actively engaged in the selection of suitable topics, genres and the commissioning of writers, as well as the funding, research and editing of projects. Such agents include commissioning and selecting editors, their departmental or imprint heads, manuscript editors, ghostwriters, designers, publicists, the commercial buyers and sellers of the manuscript rights to publication of the book itself as well as the subsidiary rights to it, the managers and buyers of the large book chains, and so on. This network of agents, as popular commentators bemoan, indicates 'that the writer is no longer the most important part of a book,' as though this once was the case.<sup>18</sup>

To suppose that textual production involves simply the choosing of autonomous manuscripts which are then type-set and distributed as books in a kind of chronological production line as Coser, Kadushin and Powell suppose in the gatekeeping quotation above ignores the evidence which they have compiled. For example, they describe the existence of loose structures or social networks in trade fiction publishing which relate writers, literary agents, editors, reviewers, and so on, in a system of production and explain how these structures or networks construct the demand for and supply of trade fiction manuscripts and, as a corollary, why few unsolicited (that is, relatively autonomous) manuscripts are selected for publication.<sup>19</sup> They note, further, that in contrast to trade fiction publishing networks, academic and college publishing networks are relatively more organised because they are usually grafted onto already existing and highly bureaucratised academic and college research and teaching programs. And, they note, the small and regulated nature of the academic and college production network and market (which amounts to more or less the same thing, academic and college text producers being the principal buyers) stimulates a high number of commissions because academic series editors are usually academics who tend to have a thorough knowledge of research relevant to the series and who are well placed to put academic and college texts on academic and college reading lists (Coser, Kadushin and Powell, *Books*, 9, 81-87). Even in trade fiction the tendency for agents other than the writer to initiate manuscripts is not atypical. For example, writers in genres such as detective, mystery, thriller and romance fiction typically are required to satisfy the predetermined generic formulae of the publishing house or imprint, formulae which are determined by rather than novel to the reading market.<sup>20</sup> In other words, the (individual or collaborating) writer in the organisation of textual production is, as Russell Berman notes, simply one among many commodity producers and, because the capitalist structure of the publishing industry positions the writer as a dependent employee, writers 'will choose to write in certain ways' which are consistent with the marketing strategy of the publisher.<sup>21</sup>

Coser, Kadushin and Powell assume, against their own evidence, that publishers are relatively passive agents whose job is to winnow out the best of the autonomous manuscripts which, they

seem to believe, somehow simply arrive on the editorial desk. But according to their own survey of editors the quality of the manuscript is only one of a number of inter-related factors which inform the decision to sign. Editors cite a variety of factors determining their decision-making such as: the professional prestige of the writer; the reputation of the writer among readers; the writer's previous publishing record; the timeliness of the book; the potential prestige of the book; how well the manuscript reads; the lack of competition on the subject dealt with in the book; in-house and outside recommendations of the book; the production cost; potential sale of rights; potential first-year profitability; potential long-term profitability; and ease of promotion. And trade editors tend to rate the market value or prestige of the *writer*, rather than the quality of the *manuscript*, most highly. That is, editors base their editorial decisions on maintaining writers in or attracting writers to the house or imprint on the basis of the prestige which they carry in the field of cultural production rather than on a gatekeeping response to manuscripts (145-46).<sup>22</sup> Even further, editors tend to base their editorial decisions on the prestige of the *literary agent* who represents the writer, on the basis that prestigious writers are usually represented by prestigious literary agents. Presumably, the maintaining or attracting of prestigious writers by a publishing house may at some times precede rather than follow the reading of a manuscript, as the practice of making contractual advance payments suggests.

Other material and social factors besides the relation between writer and editor further constrain what I have called the primary production, or the initiation or selection and material construction, of books. The development of the technology necessary to mass produce and distribute paperbacks, for example, has especially determined the characteristics of mystery, romance and detective paperback genres. That individual texts of such genres are highly determined by market-driven formulae for good industrial reasons has been well documented by Janice Radway in her study of the reading practices of middle-class women.<sup>23</sup> Mystery, romance and detective paperbacks, she argues, are relatively uniform kinds of commodities because they emerged in a manufacturing and distribution system that relied on mass consumption. The capacity in the nineteenth-century American market to produce cheap books was itself consequent on the practices made possible by technological change.

Machine-made paper, mechanical typesetting, high-speed rotary-press printing and synthetic glues allowed for cheaper production costs per unit (Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 22 and 27). But it was the high capital investment cost required for such technological change which determined the need for large print runs. That is, a high turnover of large quantities of a low unit cost commodity (paperbacks) was required to cover investment costs. Incidentally, it is this capital-driven mass production rather than the existence of a population with uniform tastes and available to be mass consumers which determines the idea of mass commodities, including, in this case, 'popular' fiction. But in order for the new, large American publishers to cover their investment costs they needed to sell their mass-produced popular fiction through a large distribution network (22, 27-28).

When Mercury Publications in 1937 and Pocket Books in 1939 harnessed their new mass commodity paperbacks to existing magazine distribution networks (that is, to corner stores rather than bookstores) they did three things. Piggy-backing paperbacks on a magazine distribution system, firstly, established a point-of-sale structure which allowed for market research. But, secondly and more importantly, publishers restricted production to certain kinds of books because they needed to guarantee predictable sales of proven kinds of books. This was because the distribution network depended on the incentive to new book-sellers provided by the publishers who carried the risk on unsold books (the beginning of the returns policy). And, thirdly, a restricted range of genres dependent on tested formulae allowed for generic advertising of the list of formulaic books and even of the imprint (for the purpose of encouraging brand recognition). The new distribution network, then, *made possible* wide-ranging market research and advertising but also *depended* on wide-ranging research and advertising in order to turn a profit based on reliable sales of the proven kinds of book which would infrequently be returned by the new kind of book-sellers (28-31).

Not all publishers, however, are constrained by the need to minimise returns on all books. In fact, many publishers expect to make losses on what they call 'conscience books,' say, by new writers (Coser, Kadushin and Powell, 16). And various kinds of publishing provide more or less room to move in relation to budget costs and

patterns of consumption. But the primary production of all books is determined by the same kinds of material and social conditions, including: the various social structures which govern the relations between writers, publishers, editors, reviewers, literary agents, book-sellers, and so on; the capital-driven economic organisation which governs the expectation by various kinds of publisher to achieve various rates of and time frames for a profit return; and the status-driven social organisation which governs the non-economic decisions by publishers to invest in various kinds of more and less profitable cultural products. Book publishing marries material and economic constraints with the constraints produced by the social and status networks of particular agents in the field of cultural production. It marries, in other words, 'making enough money *and* being liked,' or, 'being felt and heard *and* coming out ahead financially.'

#### **SUPPLY-SIDE INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE CONSECRATION OF TEXTS**

Where an author gets placed in the generic class-system – as 'novelist' versus 'literary journalist' or 'essayist' – is crucial to the development of his reputation. Some genres get exiled from or discriminated against in the high canon. So even distinguished achievement in a genre of mediocre or vague literary status (the essay, the fable, the utopia) may doom a writer to exclusion from the high canon.<sup>24</sup>

In the analysis so far I have supposed that books are the result of an initiating system of primary production, supplied by agents operating within the material and social conditions which govern the field of cultural production. Beginning this account with such a supposition may have tended to reify a model of textual production in which manuscripts come first, selected by agents in the publishing network for printing, marketing and distribution, to be received finally by critics and readers who act as more or less passive textual consumers. That reading or the reception of a text is far from a passive consumption of an already existing product will be considered later in this chapter. But even the supply-side consecration of texts cannot simply be considered as a matter of a critical reception which

retrospectively assigns a high value to certain published texts, a final gatekeeping activity in which the gradual coalescing of critical opinion regarding particular writers, texts, genres and canons necessarily *follows* publication.

The consecration of texts is also a supply-side institutional activity in which pedagogical practices and course writing decisions, by determining what sort of already-existing texts deserve consecration, determine what sorts of texts primary producers consider to be worth producing next.<sup>25</sup> John Rodden's account of the 'class-system' in which a writer or text is positioned by its critical reception, while it foregrounds the institutional conditions which govern the status of the text, tends to background the productive role of critical opinion in determining which kinds of texts or writers publishers commission or select. Rodden's class-system is useful in foregrounding the systematic nature of critical and pedagogical consecration. But his apology for the 'distinguished achievement' of George Orwell (the writer he is at pains to rehabilitate) who worked, unfortunately it seems, 'in genres of mediocre or vague literary status' (Orwell's essays, fables and dystopias) resubmerges the institutional practices he is at pains to uncover. What constitutes 'distinguished achievement' and how and by whom are various kinds of 'literary status' (as well as 'non-literary status') assigned? Rodden is able to answer neither question because, firstly, he assumes 'that intrinsic, sometimes indefinable, aesthetic attributes of works contribute to authors' reputations' (Rodden, *Politics of Literary Reputation*, ix) and because, secondly, he undertheorises canon formation as a kind of simple politics of representation of or discrimination against social groups in which texts and writers are thought somehow to represent social groups.

The decisions made in the pedagogical practice of literary or textual analysis to take up certain texts in certain ways is a way of constructing those texts. For example, the decision to offer non-Shakespearean late seventeenth-century plays in an undergraduate course but still to consider those plays in terms of a close Leavisite, Marxist or feminist reading constructs those plays as objects worthy of academic attention and thereby assigns to them a position that is similar to (if 'not quite up to the standard' of) Shakespeare's plays. They become 'plays worthy of study,' suitable candidates for an extraction of ideologies or meanings, formal patterns and linguistic



characteristics which are the practices typical of literary textual analysis. The idea of a standard of taught plays is not to suggest that Shakespeare's plays really possess any necessary intrinsic characteristics to be extracted, any intrinsic merit as the best models or standard measure of seventeenth-century literature, merely that Shakespeare's plays occupy a relational position in literary textual analysis as the standard measure by virtue of the uses made of them, being deployed by Shakespearean-trained academics who use them as the major quarry for extracting materials to be examined by students in undergraduate courses.<sup>26</sup> In other words:

Shakespeare's authority is simply the artefact of various institutional practices .... Shakespeare is not the embodiment of any kind of universal or essential cultural value but is rather the instrument of parochial, or more typically, hegemonic class- and gender-bound interests .... [And] Shakespeare's authority is best understood in institutional terms ... [because] manifold institutional practices together with massive investment in concrete institutional infrastructure have jointly contributed to the cultural position of Shakespeare and the reception of his works.<sup>27</sup>

The mechanisms of selection (choosing one writer, text, genre over another) and the choice of a method of textual analysis that construct the writer, text or genre in one way or another function in the same way and assign to the writer, text or genre a value. For example, suppose I select David Malouf's short fiction for an undergraduate course, concentrating on *An Imaginary Life* and I examine the text as, say, the trace of Malouf's experience, where my choice of text and method of analysis responds to and reconfirms the choice by other teachers and course writers to set and study the same text and writer, using the same analytical method. The selecting of this text and writer and method of analysis, like the selection of Shakespeare's plays and the analysis of 'Shakespeare's personality,' functions to construct and consecrate *An Imaginary Life* and Malouf, not just as valuable objects in the literary field but as literary objects in the first place. *An Imaginary Life* as a result becomes the trace of Malouf's experience and becomes valuable because studied (and 'studyable') as the trace of Malouf's experience.<sup>28</sup> Literature is, as a

result, 'what gets taught,' as Barthes says.<sup>29</sup> But, more than this, it is the product of *the way* this object 'gets taught.'

The consecrating power of such pedagogical practices is inescapable. This is because texts (in the area of textual pedagogy but also, say, mathematical formulae, geological descriptions, physical theories, and so on in other pedagogical areas) function in an institutionalised pedagogical relation (over and above any other possible specific relations) in which the teacher subordinates the student in order to reassert and legitimise the power structure in that relation. Even further, as Bourdieu argues,

[t]he mere fact of transmitting a message within a relation of pedagogic communication implies and imposes a social definition (and the more institutionalised the relation, the more explicit and codified the definition) of what merits transmission, the code in which the message is to be transmitted, the persons entitled to transmit it or, better, impose its reception, the persons worthy of receiving it and consequently obliged to receive it and, finally, the mode of imposition and inculcation of the message which confers on the information transmitted its legitimacy and thereby its full meaning.<sup>30</sup>

That is, the process by which certain texts are consecrated is embedded in the power relations which structure the pedagogical practices of the institution.<sup>31</sup> For Bourdieu, this embedding is by and large disguised by or misrecognised in the practices typical of schools in a kind of conspiracy theory of ruling-class domination.<sup>32</sup> But, on Bourdieu's own terms, *any* pedagogical action constructs institutional relations of domination and subordination *regardless* of the class interests or relations of specific agents. Similarly, to return to the uses of texts, the selection of a set of texts (over all other texts) and a method of analysis constructs institutional relations of consecration which value and authorise those texts (over all other texts) regardless of the class interests or relations of specific agents.<sup>33</sup>

Texts, then, are constructed by the institutional uses to which they are put. Situating the construction and consecration of texts in pedagogical practices makes it possible to reject the problematic assumption that texts in general, and canonical texts in particular, are *expressions of social identities* which somehow *represent* (or fail to represent) various social groups. Rejecting this has important conse-

quences because it allows for the demolition of the major obstacle to any explanation of the institutional practices of cultural production which rests firmly on the belief that texts are autonomous objects, in the case of the canon debate, autonomous objects which represent dominant (or alternative) social interests.

John Guillory has usefully repositioned the canon debate in exactly the terms I am using here. For Guillory, the canon is dependent on conditions provided by the school, the syllabus and curricula. In his view,

it is only by understanding the social function and institutional protocols of the school that we will understand how works are preserved, reproduced, and disseminated over successive generations and centuries. Similarly, where the debate [over canon formation] speaks about the canon as representing or failing to represent particular social groups, I will speak of the school's historical function of distributing, or regulating access to, the forms of cultural capital.<sup>34</sup>

The moves, Guillory argues, which have characterised the canon debate and the demand to 'open the canon' are grounded in simplistic assumptions about the inclusion of texts in and exclusion of texts from the canon, where inclusion is seen to be a form of representation and exclusion a form of non-representation.<sup>35</sup> This constructs canonical and non-canonical texts in the canon debate as though they are vehicles supposedly representing dominant and subordinate social groups. Both canonical and non-canonical texts are thought to be expressions of political (dominant or resistant or alternative) stances (Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 10). But the argument to 'open the canon' to new texts by individuals defined in terms of social groups, like women, say, or migrants, which have been hitherto 'unrepresented' or 'under-represented' does not in fact open the canon. Rather, it establishes a new relation between texts, social identities and social groups and a new set of canonical texts which become canonical by virtue of being taught.

This new relation between texts, social identities and social groups continues to construct the idea of texts as expressions of social identities. And in this new relation the representativeness (or unrepresentativeness) of texts in the canon appears to be the condition of canonicity or non-canonicity. This appears to be plausible

only because representativeness, where texts are thought to represent social identities, operates as the ruling contemporary condition for canon formation (17). Even more, the contemporary emphasis on social identity as the central determinant governing inclusion in or exclusion from the canon actually retrospectively constructs the process of canon formation as one which has *always* been determined by social identity. Such a process 'requires a revisionist history in which social identity is [that is, is made to be] the major *negative* criterion of judgement' (353, note 50).

Besides taking the canon debate apart by examining its simplistic assumption that texts represent social groups and express writers' experiences as representative members of those groups, Guillory usefully repositions the analysis of canon formation in terms of the practices of using, that is, *teaching and studying* texts in institutional settings. Such a move shifts the focus from lists of texts to the processes by which those lists are determined and the uses to which they are put, for example, in the construction of syllabi and anthologies. The syllabus and the anthology are institutional products whose function is to confer status on certain texts over other texts. The idea that a text is 'on the syllabus' or 'in the anthology,' Guillory argues, imagines a canonical totality from which possible selections are made. So any revision of the selection is not an objection to the canon but a reinforcing of it. Such a relation to the canon will be illustrated in Part Two, where I shall try to show how short story anthology editors lay claim to a privileged access to a supposedly autonomous, already-existing canon and to a special capacity to discern in one form or another the proper representative selection of short fiction to be drawn from it.

Whatever choices are made in selecting texts for a syllabus or anthology, whether the choices are conservative or radical, the canon is not overthrown because every construction of a syllabus or anthology institutes the canon (31). This is because the list of texts which make up a syllabus or an anthology contents page imagines a whole from which the texts are supposed to be a selection and because syllabi and anthologies construct the coherence and unity of their lists of texts by making reference to one tradition or another, say, English Literature, Romantic poetry, the Nationalist short story, Australian women's writing, or whatever. That is,

[t]he canon achieves its imaginary totality, ... not by embodying itself in a really existing list, but by retroactively constructing its individual texts as a *tradition*, to which works may be added or subtracted without altering the impression of totality or cultural homogeneity.<sup>36</sup> (33)

Consequently, any alternative syllabus or anthology merely constructs a new tradition with its own imaginary totality and its own retrospectively constructed, newly-minted traditions. And such institutional new minting remakes the texts as *texts for study* where the context in which the text was first produced and consumed is suppressed by the new pedagogical context and by the syllabus or anthology apparatus which collects together certain texts and examines or 'introduces' them in the light of the retrospectively constructed tradition (Romantic poetry, the Nationalist short story, Australian women's writing, and so on) which is the justification for the syllabus or anthology in the first place. It is because syllabuses and anthologies are constructed for certain uses, typically for study, and because this suppresses the various conditions in which texts were or might otherwise be used that literary critics, editors and so on are able to present texts as the best selection from the canon and to consecrate them as the best examples of a homogeneous cultural tradition – 'our best.' By constructing an institution like a syllabus or anthology, in other words, literary critics, editors, and so on, are merely going about their own business, which is to preserve the homogeneous cultural tradition which they create and to maintain their control over it.

Texts, then, are canonical by virtue of being constructed as examples of cultural traditions and selections from the imaginary totalities of 'Western Culture,' or 'English Literature,' or 'The Nationalist short story,' or whatever. But these cultural traditions and imaginary totalities are merely the work of pedagogical practices which serve the interests of pedagogical practitioners like literary critics. Guillory's project to expose the reifying notion of the canonical text as a representation of social interests and specifically pedagogical practices is essential to any analysis of the material and social conditions that determine 'the rules of the game,' individual agents' 'feel for the game,' as Bourdieu puts it, and the field of cultural production itself. By demonstrating the pedagogical basis of the process of canonising texts Guillory is able to put to rest the notion of the

canon as an autonomous object. Canons, like texts, are constructed in their use: they are the result, that is, of social practices and material constraints. This fact is inescapable: even my analysis of this construction of texts and canons here constructs texts in its own way.

In order to deal with the text as an object for analysis the discussion so far has persisted in viewing the text as a kind of 'supply-side' commodity, assuming for the moment that texts are simply commodities that exist uniformly, independent of readers. It remains now to consider those 'demand-side' institutional practices which construct 'the reader' and consequently construct various possible 'readerly texts.'

### **DEMAND-SIDE INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'THE READER'**

Re-siting reading and the text read in a history of cultural production means giving oneself a chance of understanding the reader's relation to his or her object and also of understanding *how the relation to the object is part and parcel of that object.*<sup>37</sup>

Commercial texts ... are ... sanctioned, reiterated, selected, commoditised .... [T]here is a selective tradition ... at work ... [that] valorises particular practices, encourages particular practices and discourages others .... [W]hat happens in our culture is that institutionally certain competencies are cultivated and selected with this technology, then favoured, then sanctioned, then encouraged – all the way from that first bedtime story to the portrayal of the kids reading on TV. All the way down there are messages saying 'these are the norms of the literary event', 'this is what you do with books.'<sup>38</sup>

The relation between texts and readers is one of dual influence. This two-way street can be explained in terms of the conventions that are characteristic of various genres which, for example, determine what is an appropriate narrative point of view, plot or set of images for a narrative, or what possibilities are available to characters in, say, realist or psychological or meta-fictional novels, or what makes a satis-

factory beginning and ending for, say, a mystery or Western or thriller. These sorts of conventions are at the same time repeated in texts ('really there') and discoverable because readers bring to the text reading strategies which lead them to expect such structures ('really in the reader's reading practices.') Indeed, the reading strategies that we possess determine what we mean by 'appropriate,' 'possible' or 'satisfactory' when we are discovering conventional structures in texts. But conventional structures can be said to be *in* texts because writers are trained by their reading and therefore depend on but also thereby reconstruct generic, familiar characteristics which in turn construct readers' expectations. In other words,

[h]aving accepted, chosen, discovered or invented appropriate forms, speakers and writers are then guided by the structure of those forms .... [So] speakers' and writers' individual creative processes are influenced and socialised by their awareness of genres *both as available strategies and as reader expectations*.<sup>39</sup>

That is, 'genres are social processes that correspond to (*and also construct*) particular types of auditors/readers' (Coe, "'An Arousing and Fulfilment of Desires": The Rhetoric of Genre,' 184, emphasis added). But even in such a view of the two-way process by which texts and readers construct one another, in a move typical of genre theory, the text occupies a privileged status, firstly, as a result of the emphasis on the primacy of texts in constructing readers and, secondly, as a result of the suppression of the institutional pedagogical processes that codify and discipline reading practices in favour of a focus on those characteristics of texts that are thought to constitute reading practices. But while readers learn to read (and to hold expectations and to construct interpretations) largely as a result of being exposed to various kinds of text, they also learn under the influence of as well as in reaction against more and less explicit teaching. And more and less explicit teaching constitutes texts by determining what makes for proper (that is, possible) readings.

In order to see how texts are constituted we need to see how the reader's reading practice is also constituted. The reader's constitution of the text in terms of what might loosely be called 'reader-response theory,' and the constitution of the reader in terms of the historical and pedagogical basis of the practice of 'active reading,' will be considered in the final part of this chapter.

The problem posed by reader-response theorists is to do with the location of meaning in texts. For example,

if meaning is embedded in the text, the reader's responsibilities are limited to the job of getting it out; but if meaning develops ... in a dynamic relationship with the reader's expectations, projections, conclusions, judgements, and assumptions, these activities (the things the reader *does*) are not merely instrumental, or mechanical, but essential.<sup>40</sup>

Stanley Fish focuses his analysis of textual production on the reader because, he argues,

the making and revising of assumptions, the rendering and regretting of judgements, the coming to and abandoning of conclusions, the giving and withdrawing of approval, the specifying of causes, the asking of questions, the supplying of answers, the solving of puzzles ... are interpretive – rather than being preliminary to questions of value, they are at every moment settling and resettling questions of value ... [that is,] not *waiting* for meaning but *constituting* meaning (Fish, *Is There a Text?* 159, emphasis added).

Such a view is not without its difficulties when it comes to textual analysis, as Fish is quick to admit.

The main difficulty is that, in ascribing practices to readers, any theory necessarily constructs a model of what readers do in a way which reifies actual reading practice.<sup>41</sup> For example, in his own reader-response critique of the way a reader reads Milton's poems, Fish appropriates the notion of 'line endings' and treats it as a *fact* which is simply evident in the text rather than as a *convention* which is a product of interpretive strategies. That is, he admits,

[w]hat my principles direct me to 'see' are readers performing acts; the points at which I find (or to be more precise, declare) those acts to have been performed become (by a sleight of hand) demarcations *in* the text; those demarcations are then available for the designation 'formal features,' and as formal features they can be (illegitimately) assigned the responsibility for producing the interpretation which in fact produced them ... [so] the



facts [the critic] points to are there [in the text], but only as a consequence of the interpretive (man-made) model that has called them into being. (163 and 167)

Fish's view is useful, so long as we are able to think of the text as being the product of the strategies of readers rather than as a pre-existing fact. His idea of interpretive strategies then becomes a powerful tool, enabling us to think of texts being constituted in different ways. For example, executing different interpretive strategies makes different texts; two readers who execute the same sorts of interpretive strategies, and thereby perform similar interpretive acts, tend to agree, apparently objectively, about the meanings and stylistic characteristics typical of the genre of which the text is thought to be an example; and, most importantly, readers who execute similar interpretive strategies, performing similar kinds of interpretive acts across a number of texts, construct those texts as similar kinds of texts.

The idea of interpretive strategies explains the way texts are shaped by reading. Given that texts depend on the interpretive strategies readers bring to them, textual meaning becomes relative, potentially infinitely plural. This is a consequence which Fish attempts to resist but which other textual theorists like Michel de Certeau embrace. In de Certeau's model, the reader produces a mutating text by insinuating him or herself into the place of the author, or, put another way, by poaching or appropriating the author's property in order to make it his or her own.<sup>42</sup> For de Certeau, the text is both a system through which the reader passes in a more or less constrained, more or less resistant way and a reservoir of forms out of which the reader establishes meaning (de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 169). As a result,

[t]he reader takes neither the position of the author nor the author's position. He invents in texts something different from what they 'intended.' He detaches [texts] from their (lost or accessory) origin. He combines their fragments and creates something un-known in the space organised by their capacity for allowing an indefinite plurality of meanings. (169)

This potential for plural meaning is, de Certeau thinks, the site in which readers conform to or resist cultural authority.

The model offered by de Certeau operates on the basis of a simple binary scheme in which a socially dominant elite has a vested interest in maintaining conformist readings of texts, opposed by dominated groups who resist such an interest by practising a form of reading which 'insinuates' (172) oppositional readings into the text. There are the same kind of problems in this view as there are in the debate over canon formation which has generally deployed an over-simplified conception of texts as representations similar to de Certeau's model. Just how conformist reading subscribes to the hegemonic ideology of the elite, how elites actually maintain hegemonic readings, why non-conformist appropriations of texts are necessarily oppositional, and why elite appropriations of texts are not, remain unclear in de Certeau's description. But we should also question the grounds of his model of reading as appropriation. For de Certeau, unlike Fish, texts exist prior to reading, and readers are constrained by the structures or reservoir of possibilities within which they read. By starting with the autonomy of the text as an artefact, a structure or reservoir within or from which various meanings might be extracted, his model cannot satisfy his claim that reading is infinitely plural because reading is always constrained by the structure or the reservoir within or from which meaning must be extracted.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, Fish's model has the advantage of explaining *why* meaning is potentially infinitely plural.

Hoping to avoid such a conclusion, Fish suggests two concepts which he believes serve to regulate reading practice. One is the idea of the situatedness of interpretation. Following John Austin's speech-act theory, Fish argues that the meaning of a sentence, *I will go*, depends on the circumstances in which it is used (284).<sup>44</sup> And some situations are 'more available' than others (308), more often and more widely used, or, 'so widely lived in that for a great many people [but not, apparently, for Stanley Fish] the meanings they enable seem "naturally" available' (309) or 'objectively true.' Such a view supposes that because situations determine possible meanings (because *I will go* is a warning, promise, threat, prediction, or whatever, depending on the situation in which it is uttered) meaning is never objective yet is not infinitely plural either because always determined by the situation in which it is *uttered*. But the situatedness of any utterance or longer stretch of text does not alter the radically contingent possibilities of *interpreting* the utterance or text because

the situation, however reliable, is never absolutely fixed, always subject to possible change over time, and particularly to the re-situating of the utterance or text in a classroom where it becomes the subject of various kinds of pedagogical scrutiny that may bear no link to the conditions in which it was first produced. Meaning, that is, is not always determined by the situation in which it is *uttered* but by the situation in which it is *interpreted*, and Fish is back to square one in his attempt to avoid the conclusion that all we have left in textual interpretation are radically contingent meanings and texts. To be fair, Fish's concept of situation can be rehabilitated, but this project requires an analysis of the institutional conditions which govern the situatedness of interpretation, a project which remains under-developed in Fish's model.<sup>45</sup>

The situatedness of interpretation relates to the other concept Fish believes serves to regulate the otherwise infinite number of possible interpretive strategies and the readings of texts which they produce. Fish calls this idea the 'interpretive community.' Basically, readers tend to execute conventional interpretive strategies which fall within the broadly agreed practices of a community of readers. This is most probably true, but in order to account for the way in which readings are constrained by an interpretive community Fish needs to specify the historical conditions of its formation and the institutional conditions of its maintenance, to explain, in other words, how 'broadly agreed practices' are determined and maintained. And these historical and institutional conditions may well uncover various kinds of struggle for control over what counts as an appropriate interpretive strategy for a particular group of interpreters. By emphasising the interpretive *community*, implying as it does a common interest, Fish suppresses the possibility of seeing the hegemonic practices and struggles against them which underlie the possibility of using the particular interpretive strategies that constrain readers. In order to expose such political practices, again, Fish needs to examine the historical conditions which have formed various interpretive strategies and the institutional conditions which maintain various interpretive strategies for reading texts.<sup>46</sup>

Genre theorists have attempted to negotiate the inadequacy of the concept of interpretive community by locating the apparatus which constrains possible interpretations within the text or genre, where the text or genre is the 'trigger' for particular conventional

reading practices, rather than the other way around. For Anne Freadman,

the publishing conventions that make ... books the way they are – with covers, titles, bibliographical and cataloguing information, title pages, tables of contents, acknowledgments, prefaces by series editors, footnotes, indexes, glossaries, etc. – are *notational frames for the ceremonies of reading*

which constrain the physical practices and interpretive strategies that are available to readers (Freadman, 'Anyone for Tennis?' 60, emphasis added).<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Carolyn Miller locates the process by which readers come to shared interpretations in 'the process of typification ... [by which] we create recurrence, analogies, similarities ... not [in] a *material situation* (a real, objective, factual event) but [in] our construal of a *type*' presumably derived not from real, objective, factual events but from the text (Miller, 'Genre as Social Action,' 29, emphasis added). Miller is well advised to avoid the conclusion that interpretation results from 'real, objective, factual events' because such events are themselves the product of interpretation, but to theorise interpretation as the construal of types evident in texts requires going beyond the immediate act of reading, to uncover the social practices that constrain what counts as an appropriate or inappropriate interpretive strategy at a particular time and place and to explain the emergence and durability of those social practices. Charles Baserman admits as much when, in the same collection of essays, he recognises that '[a] genre exists only in the recognitions and attributions of the users' (Baserman, 'Systems of Genres and the Enactment of Social Intentions,' 82).

Despite the under-theorised nature of text-biased reader-response and genre theories, however, the model they offer provides a much-needed corrective to the view that, 'we ... have free-standing readers in a relationship of perceptual adequacy or inadequacy to an equally free-standing text' and makes possible, but does not fully explain, the alternative view that, 'we have readers whose consciousnesses are constituted by a set of conventional notions which when put into operation constitute in turn a conventional, and conventionally seen, object' (Fish, *Is There a Text?* 332). While Fish allows us to deal with the text as a contingent artefact he continues to resist the conclusion that the contingent artefactual nature of reading and

making texts leads in practice to the construction of multiple and finally indeterminate meanings. But in order to support this resistance he, like Freadman, Miller and Baserman, might fruitfully examine those historical conditions which have formed readers and various ways of reading and the institutional conditions which maintain various interpretive strategies for reading texts. A promising way to begin an examination of such historical conditions is to problematise our notion of reading as dependent on the solitary, active, literary reader. Even in doing this, however, Fish would not have the satisfaction of reaching a positive bedrock of finally constrained meaning, as I shall show below.

Our understanding of reading is, according to Elizabeth Long, 'governed by a ... powerful and ... partial picture of the solitary reader' but

[t]he theoretical location of reading in the private sphere ... neglects ... the social *infrastructure* that is necessary, at the most concrete level, for enabling and sustaining literacy and sustained reading itself .... By the 'social infrastructure' I mean two things. Foundationally, that reading must be taught, and that socialisation into reading always takes place within specific social relationships ... [and secondly that r]eading ... requires ... an infrastructure as *social base*.<sup>48</sup>

Long's project is to uncover the sociality of reading practices, not least in order to examine the ideology of the solitary reader which, as she notes, 'suppresses recognition of the infrastructure of literacy and the social or institutional determinants of what's available to read, what is "worth reading," and how to read it' (Long, 'Textual Interpretation as Collective Action,' 193).

Long's view of the social infrastructure for reading provides a more useful analytical model than Fish's interpretive community that might explain the constraining forces on interpretation, emphasising the social role of institutions as contested sites in which authority, that is, the power to legitimate some kinds of reading practice and not others, is at stake. But Long fails to consider how the ideology of the solitary reader emerged and why it possesses hegemonic authority. In a corrective move, Martha Woodmansee shows how the solitary reader, equipped with the skills to 'read actively,'

results from the use of the idea of aesthetic autonomy as a weapon (and subsequently a discipline) in the cultural politics of eighteenth-century Germany and nineteenth-century England.<sup>49</sup>

Woodmansee's method in uncovering the historical background to the politics of reading practices is to examine the foundations on which Schiller builds his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Schiller's project to take the high Romantic road in order to safeguard the *prestige* of poetry (as against the healthy *sales* of contemporary popular poets like Gottfried Burger) rests, Woodmansee argues, on such projects as the more pedagogically explicit *The Art of Reading Books* by Johann Adam Bergk. Bergk's pedagogical construction of the active reader emphasised the development of close reading skills which allowed the reader to analyse the author's purpose and the relationship between this purpose and those discoverable features frequently found in certain texts which could be dissected and then synthesised in the complete *explicated* text. His approach transformed reading into explication and readers into authoritative critics (in a way that paralleled the later 'close reading' of New Criticism), and required rereading, intensive reading and, most importantly for Schiller and other 'high literary' writers, the availability of texts which could sustain and reward such close attention. The effect was to 'drive ... middle-class readers to classical [and ultimately Romantic] authors by turning them into classical [and ultimately Romantic] readers' (Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 101).

Bergk's production of the active reader was not, of course, disinterested but a political move that was exploited by those writers who had a stake in maintaining their prestige in the literary field (as writers worthy of active reading) and in improving their chance of increased sales to the increasing market of active readers who required new kinds of 'difficult' texts (4-5 and 96-101). Long's solitary reader can be seen, then, as the product of pedagogically constructed and politically situated practices. By marshalling such readers, previously low-selling, difficult writers like Schiller were able to maintain their prestige in the literary field and cash in on the new market that was delivered to them.

Woodmansee takes account of the cultural politics out of which the particular textual practices of active reading emerged, but she does not explain why the more or less marginal eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century practice of active reading has taken on such a widespread, central and hegemonic role in the twentieth century. To do this requires an understanding of the history of the institutional rise of 'School English' as a pedagogical practice.

'English' is so widely experienced by school students and so naturalised a discipline that the category itself as well as 'English' texts and the social practices – reading, discussing and writing about texts in particular ways – that make up the category can easily be taken for granted. Ian Hunter's remarkable study of the emergence of literary education explains *why* 'English' and the disciplined kinds of reading and writing practices which it constructs have become central to the business of schooling. According to Hunter, 'English' is the result of entirely

contingent historical circumstances in which a minority aesthetico-ethical 'practice of the self' [the Romantic relation to things encouraged by Bergk's active readers and Schiller's aesthetics, among other influences] found itself redeployed as a discipline in an apparatus [popular education] aimed at the moral supervision and cultural formation of populations.<sup>50</sup>

Hunter's broad argument is that the corrective network of practices which made up the apparatus of popular education borrowed the 'culture' of Romantic aesthetics in which the self is, quite usefully, considered as an autonomous, rational and sensory being. What made the originally marginal practices of the *self-cultivating* cultural elite (like the active reader as authoritative critic) so useful to the project of popular education (or population management) was that the instituting of new pastoral techniques to create a morally-managed environment in the school and school-yard required the exercise of some kind of practice which led from external discipline to the internalising of the social norms of the school. And the elite practice of aesthetics, including the practice of active reading, provided a ready-made model for this project (Hunter, *Culture and Government*, 70-83).

The close fit between the practices of the self-cultivating aesthetic elite and the needs of popular education tends to obscure the contingent nature of the relation between the two. The early contact between popular education and aesthetic elite culture was the result of the administrative needs of the new, large-scale educational insti-

tution. The aesthetic practice of active reading constructed a disciplined, autonomous, investigating reader. Popular education required a set of practices which could be taught and learned, supervised and investigated but, most importantly, internalised and normalised for whole populations (82-83). The contingent place of active reading in this expropriation of the marginal aesthetic practice of the cultural elite for the management of the population as a whole resulted, Hunter argues, from the peculiar needs of an administratively (and presumably financially) under-resourced institution which relied on the 'exemplary force' of the inspectorate, where school inspectors like Matthew Arnold operated as the embodiment of the ideal citizen. Popular education, that is, drew on

[t]he exemplary standing of the inspectorate [which] allowed the new corrective technologies of the social sphere to penetrate and transform the voluntary school networks. The public control of education was thus achieved not through the exercise of class or state power, but through the form in which governmental technology personified itself in the ethical authority of the cultivated man. It was in this manner that the minority practice of ethical self-shaping was linked to the strategy for governing the population invested in the morally administered environment of the popular school. (106-07)

Hunter's account usefully turns 'English' on its head in order to explain why practices like active reading hold such a central place in popular education. 'English' becomes 'the literary form of a special pedagogy, rather than ... the pedagogical form of literary criticism' (115).

This literary form of a special pedagogy designed to normalise a population of citizens proved and continues to prove extremely useful. 'English' allows the teacher to elicit apparently subjective responses from the student and hold up such responses for examination and correction against the teacher's own normalised response and, in so doing, provides the social machinery that enables the construction, supervision and internal self-maintenance of the self in terms of the norms of the popular school system. In contemporary 'English,'

the pupil, in making manifest forms of behaviour, thought, feeling and sentiment which are then subject to



correction via the normalising gaze of an ethical exemplar – the teacher – [,] is induced to embark on a program of infinite, non-coercive, self-correction, to become the active agent of his/her own moral normalisation.<sup>51</sup>

And 'English' retains its position as such a useful pedagogical technology for social control because it is able to use reading and writing as 'expressions of the self ... [which are] amenable to correction and revision' (Bennett, *Outside Literature*, 178).

Hunter's theory provides a useful account of the construction and use of 'English' which helps to explain the hegemonic function to which English has been and continues to be put without resorting to a simplistic conspiracy theory in which the ruling class dictates cultural values. The view that it is not a class conspiracy but the contingent institutional needs of the school apparatus which serve to construct a technology of subjugation confirms Gramsci's view that hegemony is the result of the fusion of an ensemble of institutional practices. This enables Hunter to illustrate the Gramscian hypothesis that 'dominance is created through a complex cultural interplay ... in which the mentality of the oppressed permits them to accept the domination that shapes their perceptions.'<sup>52</sup>

The idea that 'English' as a pedagogical technology relies on active reading as a key method in the supervision and subsequent self-correction of large populations of individuals has profound implications for the way in which 'the reader' and 'the text' can be considered. It becomes impossible to consider readers or texts as autonomous things that are innocently independent of political interests. Literary criticism, the sort of active reading which requires instruction in the use of certain kinds of text which, in turn, stimulates demand for certain kinds of text is the *product* of pedagogical practices and not the other way around: 'English' teaching produces suitable 'English' texts. This means that the 'literary properties' to be found in certain kinds of texts are merely the constructs of literary practices which result from a variety of contingent and political moments.

The active reading of the pedagogically constructed reader, then, can usefully be seen as a set of socially constructed and provisional practices which constrain what can be done with texts. This is as much as to say that the active reader is a particular and currently ascendant historical construction which derives from and in turn

maintains certain textual practices and suppresses others. This explains why, according to Fish's description of reading, people *do* operate in agreement as a result of playing by shared – by and large pedagogically constructed – rules. But such a contingent set of socially constructed practices in no way necessarily limits the potentially infinite possibilities of making meaning. They merely determine what is an appropriate thing to say about or do with a text at a particular time and in a particular place for a particular social agent in or from a particular social group. Even so, it is such socially constructed practices that stimulate the demand for certain kinds of text, suited to these practices, which we call 'literary' texts.

There is, of course, a whole range of alternative reading practices that I have not examined which construct readers and their texts in similar sorts of ways. My concern so far has been to uncover the contingent, institutionally and politically situated nature of cultural production, both of a supply-side and a demand-side kind. In doing this I have concentrated on the constructedness of the literary text because these texts rely obviously and heavily on the pedagogical practices that supply the literary text, genre or canon by putting them on offer and, equally, rely on the construction of readers trained in the specific practices of close, critical, that is 'active,' reading. This is not to say, however, that literary texts are highly mediated by the institutions of textual production while mass-market texts are somehow not. I have not, until now, allowed the distinction between literary and mass-market texts, or between 'high' and 'low' cultural products, and some explanation of my methodology may now be in order. I began this chapter without problematising 'culture,' and for good reason. 'Culture' and 'literature,' as I have argued above, are always determined by those agents who compete for control over, and privileged access to, the resources and practices that define or, better, that construct 'cultural' and 'literary' objects. So 'high culture' or 'literature' and their opposites aren't *anything*, they do not exhibit any positive characteristics in an objective sense: they are merely what is 'up for grabs' in a field of scarce resources and are power- and value-laden in this field in the same way as are, say, various sports in their field. 'Literature,' in other words, is the result of a historically specific set of social practices, the product of the ensemble of 'institutionally and discursively regulated forms of use and de-

ployment to which selected texts are put' (Bennett, *Outside Literature*, 140-41) or, as John Frow puts it, of the historically specific literary formation which systematises and regulates the production, reception and circulation of texts which constitute the category 'literature.'<sup>53</sup>

To say that the 'literary' text is constructed by social practices whose origins are open to discovery and whose status is finally the result of contingent events is, of course, to attack the objectivist privileging of an unproblematic category called literature and, equally, to question the assumption that literary texts somehow exist independently of commercial or industrial interests, the sort of assumption from which criticisms of the commercial nature of textual production, best characterised by the position of Theodor Adorno, have been made. Adorno's attack on the commercialised 'low' cultural products of what he called 'the culture industry' is in reality a disguised defence of the supposedly autonomous 'high culture' which he valued. But the distinction between low and high cultural products will not hold. All cultural products are constructed by the historically determined, institutionally regulated and politically interested practices of agents in the cultural field.

According to Adorno, however, the 'culture industry' is the cause of the 'aesthetic impoverishment' of twentieth-century culture.<sup>54</sup> Previously autonomous cultural products have, in his view, been colonised or corrupted by the intrusion of a hegemonic capitalist (or even fascist) elite which controls mass production. Mass organisation and production result in the rationalisation of distribution and the consequent standardisation of the product.<sup>55</sup> There are problems with this view. Adorno's assumption that somehow autonomous cultural products are prey to basic industrial interests depends on the crude and problematic Marxist view of culture as the secondary pile of super-structural stuff built on an apparently pre-cultural primary industrial base.<sup>56</sup> And he makes two further problematic assumptions: firstly, that large-scale cultural production is necessarily conventional and formulaic while small-scale production is somehow, by definition, not conventional; and, secondly, that cultural production outside the culture industry operates according to the non-commercial rules of disinterestedness. Most questionable of all, however, is Adorno's underlying dehistoricised assumption that cultural production somehow existed au-

tonomously prior to being colonised or corrupted by the culture industry.

As I have tried to show, there is no cultural production which exists autonomously. All cultural practices and products depend on institutional, including industrial, practices. In fact, the 'field of cultural production' might just as usefully be described as a 'culture industry.' But Adorno's use of the term, 'culture industry,' is the expression of a different, more anxious moment in the description of cultural production than my own. Adorno is placed in the middle, not the end, of the century at a time when social and political conflicts arising out of mass industrialisation and commodification tended to identify 'culture' with a threatened 'civilisation' opposed, variously, by the barbarisms of materialism, commercialism, democracy or socialism.<sup>57</sup> 'Culture' as I have used it in this chapter is, on the other hand, simply that set of practices and products which are contested by those agents who consider themselves to be in the field of cultural production, including those agents who consider themselves or are considered by others to occupy positions of establishment authority, oppositional resistance, or any other position in between. How one defines a cultural practice or product is, then, a matter of the description of the contested and historically grounded conditions in which agents act, rather than of the positive description of the formal properties of cultural or literary artefacts.

Such a view is, of course, tautological, but no more so than the view that the meaning of the term 'culture' can be gleaned from an analysis of pre-determined 'cultural artefacts.' The tautological grounds of positivist conceptions of culture like Adorno's are dishonestly disguised by the theoretical game he plays in which 'culture' and 'industry' remain an opposed pair, 'culture' being all that which is (or was) non-industrial. In my tautological view, the 'culture industry' which has been the subject of this chapter has at least the virtue of referring to a *single* kind of thing, like the 'health industry,' the 'sports industry' or the 'industry industry' and is open to an examination of the historically constituted rules of the game and the terrain of the field in exactly the same sorts of ways as such industries. 'Culture,' then, comprises all those practices and products which are the contingent consequences of the rules and stakes of the game of the 'culture industry' that operates in the field of cultural production.

Some of those cultural practices and products (like the strategies typical of anthologists and critics and the uses to which anthologies, study guides and other 'secondary' texts are put) which are themselves the consequences of previous moves in the game of cultural production and which, in turn, determine the following moves in the game will be considered in Part Two.

---

<sup>1</sup> David Carter and Gillian Whitlock, 'Institutions of Australian Literature,' in James Walter, ed. *Australian Studies: A Survey*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1989, 110.

<sup>2</sup> These 'hard' and 'soft' social practices might equally be called 'shallow' and 'intensive,' terms used by Anthony Giddens in his analysis of institutional practices. Intensive social rules (of, say, language, or turn-taking in conversation) are constantly invoked and therefore tacitly held, habitual, not articulated and weakly sanctioned. Shallow social rules (regulating, say, the criminal code or what to do in a bank) are infrequently invoked and therefore require discursive articulation and strong sanctions. See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984, 21-3 and Chapter One, 38-9 above.

<sup>3</sup> George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1974, 81, emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Mary L. Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977; Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Polity, 1991, Chapter One.

<sup>5</sup> John L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, Bourdieu's hard version of the institutional basis of the performative utterance denies him a useful way of explaining the weakest link in his theory of social practice, the development of habitus into practice. For a critique of habitus, see Chapter One, 31-8 above.

<sup>7</sup> The sort of production and reproduction of institutions that Austin's theory helps to explain is further refined by Jeffrey Wieand. See Wieand's, 'Can There Be an Institutional Theory of Art?' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 39 (1981) 409-17.

<sup>8</sup> See also George Dickie, *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art*. New York: Haven, 1984. Alan Golding presents an alternative institutional theory of art in which 'institutions' are purely academic: as a result, literary canons are simply produced either in English departments or outside them. See Alan Golding, *From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry*. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> See Maurice Mandelbaum, 'Family resemblances and Generalisation Concerning the Arts,' in Morris Weitz, ed. *Problems in Aesthetics: An Introductory Book of Readings*. New York: Macmillan, 1970, 181-98, especially 187. Marcia Muelder Eaton provides a concise account of the debate over aesthetic theories in *Basic Issues in Aesthetics*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Compare Peter Bürger's view that, "works of art are not received as single entities, but within institutional frameworks and conditions that largely determine the function of the works. When one refers to the function of an individual work, one generally speaks figuratively; for the consequences that one may observe or infer are not primarily a function of its special qualities but rather of the manner which regulates the commerce with works of this kind in a given society or in certain strata or classes of a society. I have chosen the term 'institution of art' to characterise such framing conditions." Peter Bürger. *Theory of the Avant Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Unnamed publishing editor-in-chief quoted in Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin and Walter W. Powell, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing*. New York: Basic Books, 1982, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Coser, Kadushin and Powell borrow the concept of gatekeeping from Paul M. Hirsch. See Hirsch, 'Production and Distribution Roles Among Cultural Organisations: On the Division of Labor Across Intellectual Disciplines.' *Social Research* 45 (2) 1978, 315-30. Gatekeeping is taken up by Marcia Bystryn in 'Art Galleries as gatekeepers: The Case of the Abstract Expressionists,' in Arnold W. Foster and Judith R. Blau, eds *Art and Society: Readings in the Sociology of the Arts*. New York: State U of New York P, 1989, by Sally Ridgeway in 'Artist groups: Patrons and gatekeepers,' also in *Art and Society*, and also by John Curtain in 'Book

---

Publishing,' in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner, eds *The Media in Australia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993, 102-18.

<sup>13</sup> The recent trend in Australian publishing is to reject automatically any manuscript which is submitted without a literary agent's recommendation. According to Louise Thurtell, the commissioning editor for trade fiction at Transworld, the over-supply of manuscripts has never been greater and "the economics of the slush pile have never been worse." Louise Thurtell, 'Commercial Truths,' an address at The Tasmanian Spring Writers' Festival, October, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> For a description of length and breadth of circulation, or 'the long run and the short run,' see Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 97-101.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Pottinger's predictable and outraged dismissal of Stephen King and Tom Clancy's latest books is a good example of the sort of things that happen when the popular work gets the literary review treatment. Pottinger admits, at least, his inability to avoid 'playing the man, not the novel.' See Paul Pottinger, 'Mine's Bigger than Yours,' the *Weekend Australian Review* (29-30 August 1998) 13.

<sup>16</sup> See John McLaren, 'Publishing in the twentieth century,' in D. H. Borchardt and W. Kirsop, eds *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History*. Melbourne: Australian Reference Publications in association with the Centre for Bibliographical and Textual Studies, Monash University, 1988, 71-5.

<sup>17</sup> Hans Hoegh Guldberg demonstrates the strong support for local books by independent bookshops and their reliance on reviews. See *Books—Who Reads Them? A study of borrowing and buying in Australia*. Sydney: Economic Strategies [for the Australia Council], 1990, 205.

<sup>18</sup> The attempt to resuscitate 'the writer' and the attack on ghostwriting that goes with it comes from Jack Hitt, himself a ghostwriter, in 'Ghost at the machine,' *The Age*, 28 June, 1997. The extent to which cultural products are mediated by a network of agents is demonstrated, most tellingly so far as Hitt's article is concerned, by the syndication practices of the *Age*. Hitt's article was originally published in the *New York Times*. Those agents involved in the initial commissioning and later syndication of the article remain unnamed.

<sup>19</sup> It is likely, further, that corporate changes in book publishing have 'tightened' the social networks which relate writers, editors, and so on. The takeover of independent publishing houses by conglomerates has led to an increasing 'verticalisation' in the trade so that, for example, hardback and paperback imprints are now tied by conglomerate ownership rather than by a contract between editorially independent companies. See Ian Paten, 'Literary Publishing Within a Conglomerate,' in Peter Owen, ed. *Publishing Now: The Definitive Assessment by Key People in the Book Trade*. London: Peter Owen, 1993, 30-5 and Ian Chapman, 'Paperback Publishing,' in Owen, *Publishing Now*, 48-56. For an entertaining dissection of the social network or 'culture racket' that maintains Australian writers like Helen Garner, Drusilla Modjeska, David Malouf and Elizabeth Jolley see Mark Davis, *Gangland: Cultural Elites and the New Generationalism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997, 117-27.

<sup>20</sup> See Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984 (1991), 29. Page references are to the 1991 edition. Radway extends her analysis of the mass-commodification of culture in 'Mail-Order Culture and Its Critics: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Commodification and Consumption, and the problem of Cultural Authority,' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler, eds *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

<sup>21</sup> Russell A. Berman, 'Writing for the Book Industry: The Writer in Organised Capitalism,' in Berman, *Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics, and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989, 56, 66.

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Coser, Kadushin and Powell insist, even in collating these results, that the relation between writer and editor is chronological, the writer always initiating and the editor merely assessing the manuscript.

---

<sup>23</sup> Radway's problematic study of the romance-reading practices of women is preceded by an excellent account of the industrial manufacturing and distribution factors which have constrained mass-market textual production. See Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*. The first chapter is also reproduced as 'The Institutional Matrix of Romance' in Simon During, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1993, 438-53. See also Andrew Milner's discussion of the commodification of texts as a consequence of mechanical production in Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 67-74.

<sup>24</sup> John Rodden, *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989, 396.

<sup>25</sup> As well as what sorts of texts publishers consider to be worth reprinting. A text that is selected on senior secondary-school English syllabuses, for example, the New South Wales Higher School Certificate or the Victorian Certificate of Education, typically requires a print run of 10 000 or so copies, a sizeable increase on the usual 1500 to 3000 copy print run. See Hans Hoegh Guldberg, *Books – Who reads Them?* 204.

<sup>26</sup> The idea that the question of value in texts is "not about the intrinsic qualities of texts but about the uses made of them" is suggested by John Frow in 'Regimes of Value,' in Philip Mead and Marion Campbell, eds *Shakespeare's Books: Contemporary Cultural Politics and the Persistence of Empire*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Literary and Cultural Studies – University of Melbourne, 1993, 208. Of course, even the term 'Shakespeare's plays' needs to be qualified. Undergraduate courses select suitable plays from a kind of 'A' list which includes what are called 'the major tragedies' – *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* – 'the comedies' – *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, – and so on; and, more ambitiously, the 'later plays,' 'romances' or 'problem plays.' Plays in Shakespeare's 'B' list, which rarely make it onto undergraduate courses, include *Titus Andronicus*, *Henry VI (I, II and III)*, and *Henry VIII*.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Bristol, 'Shakespeare and the *Longue Duree* of Culture,' in Mead and Campbell, eds *Shakespeare's Books*, 11. This summary by Bristol should not be taken to represent his own critical position but his description of the current culturalist or New Historicist accounting for the institutional authority of Shakespeare.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Neilsen and Ivor Indyk do exactly this in their critical studies of Malouf. See Chapter Six below.

<sup>29</sup> The phrase is quoted in Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, 172.

<sup>30</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Sage, 1977, 109. The sense in which I use the term 'consecration' here as a form of political legitimisation is borrowed from Bourdieu.

<sup>31</sup> See Bourdieu, *Reproduction*, xiii.

<sup>32</sup> For a critique of Bourdieu's concept of misrecognition see Chapter Two, 63-4 above.

<sup>33</sup> For a simple theory of pedagogical practice and canon formation as a class-based conspiracy see Thomas Docherty, 'Authority, History and Postmodernism,' in Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller, eds *What Is An Author?* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993, 59-60. According to Docherty, "[a] group shares certain class values, and then pretends that according to their [sic] understanding of specific texts those values are validated by the texts which are deemed to 'contain' those values," 59. My argument differs from Docherty's in locating the constructedness of the text not in its function as the representation of class interests but as the effect of pedagogical practices which necessarily consecrate some texts and ignore others.

<sup>34</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993, vii. While Guillory speaks of 'cultural capital' he might just as easily refer to 'cultural resources.' For a critique of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital which is adopted by Guillory see Chapter Two, 59-64, above.



<sup>35</sup> See Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 6-16, and John Frow, 'Regimes of Value,' in Philip Mead and Marion Campbell, eds *Shakespeare's Books*, 208.

<sup>36</sup> The retrospective construction of 'Australian women's writing' is a recent and self-conscious example of this process which I shall consider in detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>37</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990, 101

<sup>38</sup> Allan Luke, 'The Variability of Reading Practices,' in Jock Macleod and Patrick Buckridge, eds *Books and Reading in Australian Society*. Brisbane: Institute for Cultural Policy Studies – Griffith University, 1992, 121-23.

<sup>39</sup> Richard M. Coe, "'An Arousing and Fulfilment of Desires": The Rhetoric of Genre in the Process Era – and Beyond,' in Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994, 183, emphasis added.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980, 2-3. See also Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> The tendency in reader-response theory is to construct a general report on the experience of reading from the theorist's experience or from questionnaire responses which constrain the possible kinds of reports of the experience of reading or else stimulate or construct responses suited to the theorist's theory. John Frow makes this criticism of the work of Michel de Certeau, discussed below, and Janice Radway, above. See John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995, 59. The general problem of constructing an object (for example, the literary text) and then pretending to interpret this object is dealt with by Vincent Crapanzano in 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description,' in James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984, xi-xii and xxi. The terms 'poaching,' 'bricolage' and 'ruse' are used variously to indicate de Certeau's view that the text depends on the generally subversive and makeshift nature of textual production. See de Certeau, xi-xv.

<sup>43</sup> John Frow also questions de Certeau's attempt to establish a model of reading as a disorganised (or non-organised), contingent passage through a text on the foundation of a concept of the text as a pre-existing, highly structured and constraining system. See John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*, 56-9.

<sup>44</sup> See above, 96-8.

<sup>45</sup> Fish might consider Bourdieu's theory of fields or, perhaps more usefully, Anthony Giddens's theory of settings. See Anthony Giddens, 'Structuralism, Post-structuralism and the Production of Culture,' in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner, eds *Social Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity, 1987, 215-16.

<sup>46</sup> Janice Radway goes some way in acknowledging the existence of the conditions which underpin interpretive communities: readers, she argues, "acquire specific cultural competencies as a consequence of their particular social location. Similar readings are produced ... because similarly located readers *learn* a similar set of reading strategies and interpretive codes that they bring to bear upon the texts they encounter," *Reading the Romance*, 8, emphasis added. But Radway still fails to account for the ways in which sets of reading strategies are produced and maintained.

<sup>47</sup> For a slightly different and earlier version of Anne Freedman's 'Anyone for Tennis?' see 'Untitled,' *Cultural Studies*, 2 (1) 1988, 70-99.

<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Long, 'Textual Interpretation as Collective Action,' in Jonathan Boyarin, ed. *The Ethnography of Reading*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993, 181 and 191-92. See also Peter Jaszi and Martha Woodmansee, 'Introduction,' in Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994, 9.

<sup>49</sup> See Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994, chapters 3 and 4.

- 
- <sup>50</sup> Ian Hunter, *Culture and Government: The Emergence of Literary Education*. London: Macmillan, 1988, 29.
- <sup>51</sup> Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature*. London: Routledge, 1990, 177-78.
- <sup>52</sup> Lennard J. Davis, *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction*. Methuen: New York, 1987, 39. Davis provides an excellent survey of Gramsci's project to detail the material forms or concrete institutions by which ideology is actually imposed. See also Antonio Gramsci, 'Selections From the Prison Notebooks,' in Tony Bennett, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott, eds *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*. London: Batsford/Oxford UP, 1981, and Chantal Mouffe, 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci,' also in Bennett, Martin, Mercer and Woollacott, *Culture, Ideology and Social Process*.
- <sup>53</sup> John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 84.
- <sup>54</sup> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,' in Simon During, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 33.
- <sup>55</sup> See Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. London: Routledge, 1991, especially page 80 for his reference to the 'fascistic psychology' of mass culture, and Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,' in During, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 29-35.
- <sup>56</sup> More recent Marxist accounts have gone the way of superstructural autonomy. For a neat theoretical attempt to rehabilitate the ultimately sterile concept of a cultural superstructure dependent on a material base see Nicholas Garnham, 'Contribution to a political economy of mass-communication,' in Richard Collins, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Paddy Scannell, Philip Schlesinger and Colin Sparks, eds *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*. London: Sage, 1986.
- <sup>57</sup> The point is made by Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977, 15.

# **PART 2**

**A GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN SHORT FICTION**

## Introduction

In Part One I attempted to uncover some of the practices that determine how agents operate in the cultural field, to show how 'the writer' and 'the text' are not simple, objective categories to be consumed by 'the reader.' Rather, 'the author,' 'the text' and 'the reader' are the outcomes of contests between various players, embedded for longer or shorter periods in the practices current in the field. What we count as an 'author,' for example, is the product of a broad range of practices – like aesthetic assumptions, copyright agreements, ways of producing books, and ways of reading and talking about them – which dominate the cultural field *at the moment*. The 'author' appears to be a stable fact because these sorts of practices have been reasonably durable and successful in maintaining it, for the moment. This means that the 'author,' like any other category in the field, is not in any way an objective fact, although it might appear to be.

In Part Two I want to try to show how this view might usefully explain the workings of the sub-field of 'Australian short fiction.' My method will be to show how short story anthologies, critical studies and other key practices construct this category. Anthologies are a major institution in the production and reproduction of the sub-field of 'Australian short fiction.' Their development can be traced from the instituting work of Francis Palgrave through to contemporary versions. The trace of typical claims that I shall attempt to uncover indicates the reasonably durable nature of practices that maintain the anthology as a genre. It is this durability in the sub-field, the ongoing function of anthologies in determining the object that they appear to describe, that marks the institutional character of textual production. Anthologies help to determine what is to count as 'Australian short fiction,' who are to count as writers, editors and critics of 'Australian short fiction' and how 'Australian short fiction' is to be read, as I shall attempt to show. Anthologies are not, of course, the only institutions that determine the sub-field. Reference guides and critical studies function in the same way. The

personnel who produce, deliver and consume certain kinds of content, the activity that dominates the sub-field of 'Australian short fiction,' are also maintained by means of other institutions, like 'small magazines,' Australia Council grants and 'Writers in Residence' programs, writers' festivals, and so on.

There is, though, a problem in examining these institutions, and this is that my own text will appear to occupy a position somehow above the cultural practices that I am trying to analyse, a kind of meta-discourse that stands above the texts which I scrutinise. But in examining the cultural field in general or, here, the sub-field of 'Australian short fiction,' I occupy a position that is in some ways within the sub-field. For example, this text engages with anthologies in an attempt, by and large, to re-read them in order to show what they are 'really' doing. What I think they are really doing is constructing categories that they appear only to describe. But in trying to show this I unavoidably take a position that is within what might be called the academic field. This field takes an interesting dominant position over the 'objects' it chooses to examine, a kind of 'meta-nominative' position, in which the observer, analyst or, best of all, scientist 'names' or makes sense of what is supposed to be simply the raw data of the non-academic world, stuff that is incoherent until made coherent by academic attention.

This position is, of course, itself open to reflexive academic attention. Some interesting ethnographic work has attempted to show how academic practice is "always caught up in ... invention, not ... representation."<sup>1</sup> The difficulty faced by a theory of social fields, for example, is that the theory itself tends to objectify the 'field,' as though the field really exists. This is a problem which Bourdieu ignores in his social theory of fields. Does his 'field of cultural production,' for example, exist in the social consciousness of the agents who occupy that social space which characterises cultural producers and consumers or is it simply an analytical construct?<sup>2</sup> The meta-nominative tendency, the will to objectify, it seems, is pervasive. In the pages you are just reading, for example, I claim to explain that what anthology editors 'are *really* doing is constructing categories that they appear only to describe.' This suggests that there is some kind of bedrock 'reality,' an objective mechanism that constructs the object called 'Australian short fiction' that my analysis has 'uncovered.' Besides this archaeological trope, a favourite of mine, my 'case stud-

ies' also imply a kind of quasi-scientific objectivity. Analytical 'study' stands outside, usually above, the 'cases' which I shall scrutinise in Part Two. But if I am right, if texts are the products of always contestable and contingent social practices, then the same must be true of my own text too: it is as much a case to be studied and, if studied, can be shown to be equally the product of always contestable and contingent social practices. This is not cause for panic, merely for caution. Part Two is not an attempt to get any closer to the truth, only to suggest how we might reorientate ourselves to some texts. My discussion in Part Two is not an attempt to suggest a final reading of 'Australian short fiction,' merely one reading which concentrates on the practices that are not the usual staple diet of textual analysis.

---

<sup>1</sup> The phrase belongs to James Clifford. For an excellent foray into the dilemma facing every act of analysis see James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: Uof California P, 1986, especially Vincent Crapanzano's essay, 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description.'

<sup>2</sup> This question is raised by Richard Jenkins in his probing account of Bourdieu's theories. See Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, 1992, 89.

## 4

### Short story anthologies and the construction of 'Australian short fiction'

[R]eal criticism ... occurs not in reviews or in long critical articles but in the selection and compilation of anthologies. The influence that these monuments exert has not been sufficiently recognised. One's first (and often one's firmest) sense of [the] tradition is shaped by the first anthology one totally devours.

Gary Catalano<sup>1</sup>

The sorts of behaviours, agents and texts that are called 'literary' and what is meant by 'literature' are the consequences of seemingly natural but historically specific conditions and ongoing institutional practices. This means that agents involved in cultural production are able to operate with some freedom in a field of competing interests, according to historically constituted and durable institutions – institutions like 'authorship,' publication, 'literary criticism' and 'active reading' – that determine legitimate practices in the field. Against this background I now want to show how some specific practices operate in the construction of one sub-field, Australian short fiction. To do this I want to look at the practices of anthologising (including along the way those practices involved in producing a 'literary history') and at the construction of a literary kind of writer, both materially, by means of funding decisions by arts organisations and publishers, and in terms of literary value, by means of academic literary criticism of the study guide variety.



## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SELECTIVE ANTHOLOGY

Anthologies of any kind of writing serve as monuments, operating according to the complex functions that the term incorporates. Anthologies appear to be a record of some kind of positive knowledge or corpus and accordingly present themselves as printed forms of factual evidence representing various literary genres, kinds of journalism, bodies of knowledge, or whatever. But as monuments they also seek to commemorate, that is, give value to, this factual evidence. Anthologies, in other words, play a kind of triple role. In one sense they *describe* a group of texts as though selecting them from a larger body of possibilities. In another they *constitute* that group of texts *and* what gets to be called that imaginary larger body (from which the particular anthology contents appear to be drawn). In yet another they *consecrate* that group of texts as the best examples drawn from that larger body of possibilities according to terms that the anthologist dictates.

In order to perform these roles, anthologists produce the 'anthology introduction' or apologia, a genre which positions the anthology both as one example in the tradition of anthologies and as the latest, necessary and often ground-breakingly oppositional addition to this tradition.<sup>2</sup> This triple act is, of course, one of the strategies used in canon formation where some practices, like making critical discriminations and selecting texts to 'illustrate' 'the best' or 'good writing,' or to produce a generic sample or to 'represent' social minorities, are highlighted while others, like commissioning an anthology and selecting texts on the basis of lapsed copyright, or in order to promote a particular 'school' of writers or kind of criticism, or to supply a perceived market niche, are suppressed.<sup>3</sup> By analysing the genre of the anthology introduction I will attempt to show how its strategic function is precisely to highlight those practices which encourage the potential users of the anthology to accept the selection as the positive embodiment or monument or last word on, for example, 'good writing,' 'lyric poetry' or 'writing by women' and to suppress any practices which might discourage potential users from taking the anthology as such.

The strategic claim of the anthology introduction is typically that the anthology represents a certain body of texts by and/or for a certain social group, a claim that especially marks the canonising function of anthologies. There are several generic features in these

typical strategic claims, most clearly characterised by Francis Palgrave's early, influential and long-lived anthology of poetry, *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, a revised volume of which is still in print and stocked in school bookrooms.<sup>4</sup> Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* establishes the grounds on which anthologies operate as canonising institutions. The anthology, he claims, 'represents' the already existing and organic unity of 'good literature.' The two key moves here are to establish the natural condition of a positively objective 'national literature' as *organic* and *representative*. Almost all subsequent anthologists repeat these moves.

The apparatus of Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, besides his Preface, involves a physical page by page journey towards the actual contents through a series of claims, beginning with the title cover claim to incorporate 'the Best' within the volume followed by the claim that the volume incorporates 'The World's Classics,' a claim preceding the title page and repeated in the ornate title page decoration that follows, along with the appeal to the authority of the Oxford University Press and its list of imperial outposts; next the dedication to 'ALFRED TENNYSON POET LAUREATE' which includes, by extension, the claim to Tennyson's 'just judgement and high-hearted patriotism' for the volume itself as 'a true national Anthology.'<sup>5</sup> But it is in the Preface, the direct ancestor of the anthology introduction, that Palgrave stakes his greatest claim to 'represent' an organically unified and national literature.

Palgrave's Preface, like many of its generic offspring, begins with the claim to originality. 'This little Collection differs ... from others,' in this case 'in the attempt made to include the best original Lyrical pieces and Songs in our language' (Palgrave, *Golden Treasury*, ix).<sup>6</sup> This is a claim that endures in subsequent oppositional anthologies and appears to function as a sales pitch – the remarks appear on the first page of text to be read by the browsing buyer – justifying the particular anthology in terms of potential competing and possibly long-in-print anthologies.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, Palgrave's declaration that his 'little Collection' is a selection of 'the Best' differentiates it from the earlier and encyclopaedic *The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper* of Alexander Chalmers.

Palgrave proceeds to the difficulty in defining terms (that is, in circumscribing the terrain of the field claimed by the anthology), 'lyrical poetry' being *prescribed* according to 'a few simple principles. Lyrical has been here held essentially to imply that each Poem *shall* turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation ... [or else possess] rapidity of movement, brevity, and the colouring of human passion' (ix, emphasis added). Palgrave then deals with the problem of selection (incorporating the definitional problem of 'the Best'): to distinguish the best poem 'we should require finish in proportion to brevity, ... clearness, unity, or truth,' and 'Excellence should be looked for rather in the whole than in the Parts,' while 'a few good lines do not make a good poem' (x). Palgrave's Preface is useful in the way it foregrounds the prescriptive function of the anthology, particularly as more recent anthologies attempt to submerge this prescriptive role. But the obvious prescriptive claims here – Palgrave's 'shalls' and 'shoulds' – obscure another important feature of the anthology introduction, namely, the naturalising of the anthology contents as a unity, an organic whole, rather than a collection of parts. This is important in the genesis of the anthology as an institution which by establishing a content *constitutes* a subject, like lyrical poetry or Australian short fiction, even while it appears merely to *describe* it, by virtue of collecting together parts which themselves can be united. This is the purpose of the final strategic move in the anthology introduction, to explain the logic and thereby naturalise the organisation of material.

In order to achieve 'a closer lyrical unity' Palgrave omits stanzas of poems, avoids extracts 'as essentially opposed to this unity' and arranges the poems to achieve 'the most poetically-effective order' so as to avoid a 'rapid alteration of the eye's focus ... [which] will always be wearisome and hurtful to the sense of Beauty. The poems have been ... distributed into Books ... [which] might be called the Books of Shakespeare, Milton, Gray, and Wordsworth' (xi). Under such a scheme, Palgrave's 'English Songs and Lyrical Poems' become a naturally organised fact, with an organic history traceable from the early works of Shakespeare to the latest works of the dead poets of the nineteenth century. Palgrave's scheme, in other words, organises and makes natural a lyrical canon which 'accurately reflects the *natural growth and evolution of our Poetry*' in 'a *certain unity*' (xi, emphasis added).

Palgrave's project, as this quotation and his title suggest, was to constitute *our national lyrical literature*, 'the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language,' for that huge imperial market 'wherever the Poets of England are honoured, wherever the dominant language of the world is spoken' (xiii). This dominating function of the anthology persists in its offspring, although not necessarily in an imperialist form, in the way subsequent anthologies constitute their contents and project an identity for their readership at the same time. Palgrave's anthology constitutes 'the Poets of England' for an audience of readers 'wherever English is spoken,' an imperialist function that cuts both ways, constituting (while appearing to represent) the community of the poets of England (a national lyrical literature) and constituting (while appearing to present this literature to) the community of English speaking readers of songs and lyrics.<sup>8</sup> Such constituting of both a canonical subject (whether lyrical poetry or, for example, short fiction, or Australian short fiction) and an object (consumers of lyrical poetry, short fiction, Australian short fiction as constituted by the anthology) is typical of all anthologies, as I shall attempt to show in an examination of some Australian anthologies.

### **ANTHOLOGIES OF AUSTRALIAN SHORT STORIES**

My argument here is that anthologies like Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, under the guise of describing a content or selecting a representative sample, constitute that content, the audience for it and the mode of reading it as an organic unity. But a word of caution is in order, considering what I am about to do. Analysing the constitutive practices in *any* selection of Australian short story anthologies has, in itself, the effect of constituting 'characteristic features' of what is always a problematic list of problematically representative texts, thereby constructing a positive object for enquiry (the culpable anthologies in the formation of the canonical Australian short story) in exactly the same way as the very anthology practices which I wish to problematise. To minimise this objectifying effect I have randomly selected for analysis the following rather disparate bunch of more and less critically sophisticated short story anthologies: Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson's 1963 *A Century of Australian Short Stories*, Harry Heseltine's 1976 *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*, Kerry Goldsworthy's 1983 *Australian Short Stories*,

Leonie Kramer's 1985 *My Country: Australian Poetry and Short Stories* and Laurie Hergenhan's 1986 *The Australian Short Story*. But some caution is required even here. My chronological organisation of these anthologies might imply some form of development in anthologising practice (a key claim in the genre of the anthology introduction). What prevents this, in my opinion, is the lucky inclusion of Kramer's peculiar anthology dating from 1985 which, against the grain, reconstitutes the dominance of the 'Bulletin style' of short story of the 1890s.

The function of the Australian short story anthology as a textual practice which institutes categories, like 'Australian short fiction,' is shared by its generic cousin, the descriptive 'literary history.' While the literary history is a genre with a similar function to the anthology introduction, it appears to *precede* anthologies. This is because it *enables* the anthology by producing a brief context for it, as though the anthology provides the detailed material (particular Australian short stories, for example) which illustrates the general characteristics that the literary history describes. Of course, those 'descriptions' established by the literary history, like those of the anthology, appear to describe when in fact they actually circumscribe the proper terrain of the field claimed by the history.<sup>9</sup> The genre of the literary history seems to have burgeoned in the 1980s as a vehicle for promoting the claim of various kinds of criticism to represent the establishment view of the field.<sup>10</sup> But one of the neatest examples of the genre is John Barnes's essay, 'Australian Fiction to 1920,' in Geoffrey Dutton's *The Literature of Australia*, an essay which clearly illustrates how the literary history helps to construct 'Australian Fiction' in the literary field.

Barnes's sophisticated account of the emergence of 'Australian Fiction to 1920' offers a rich picking of problematically positivistic and evaluative terms to articulate a version of the *progress* of classic 'Australian Fiction to 1920,' terms which are repeated if disguised in the accounts of every subsequent short story anthology editor.<sup>11</sup> For Barnes,

it is useless to expect to find works of art among the Australian novels of the nineteenth century. In spite of the tradition which lingers, that there is a solid body of Australian fiction in this period, it is only with Furphy's *Such Is Life* in 1903 and Henry Handel Richardson's *The*

*Australia*, an essay which clearly illustrates how the literary history helps to construct 'Australian Fiction' in the literary field.

Barnes's sophisticated account of the emergence of 'Australian Fiction to 1920' offers a rich picking of problematically positivistic and evaluative terms to articulate a version of the *progress* of *classic* 'Australian Fiction to 1920,' terms which are repeated if disguised in the accounts of every subsequent short story anthology editor.<sup>11</sup> For Barnes,

it is useless to expect to find works of art among the Australian novels of the nineteenth century. In spite of the tradition which lingers, that there is a solid body of Australian fiction in this period, it is only with Furphy's *Such Is Life* in 1903 and Henry Handel Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* in 1910 that it is possible to think of Australian classics. *Geoffrey Hamlyn, His Natural Life*, and *Robbery Under Arms* diminish in stature as time passes; they ... are not the classics of Australian fiction which they were once thought to be. They hold a considerable interest for us still, because they represent stages in the history of the progress towards an Australian prose tradition.<sup>12</sup>

The breathtaking assurance with which Barnes constitutes 'fiction' and describes the 'solid body of Australian fiction' and the 'progress towards an Australian prose tradition' of 'classics,' which are presumably 'works of art,' masks his less startling but more interesting account of the process by which such categories are established in the first place.

For Barnes, texts might rise and fall in value over time, so that texts that were 'once thought to be classics' can 'diminish in stature.' The statuary trope governing Barnes's model is significant here: texts are, he suggests, positive entities, parts of the 'solid body of Australian fiction.' This allows him to articulate the model in terms of time so that texts 'diminish in stature as time passes.' But in order for the trope to make sense Barnes needs his texts to inhabit a *place*, they need to exist ~~anywhere~~ *anywhere*, over time, and this depends on the other governing metaphor in his account, where classic texts result from a process of artefactual survival in the museum of literature. But what is it that survives here, what can we 'expect to find,' individual 'works of art' or the 'solid body of Australian fiction?' Barnes seems to want to conflate

century Australian fiction texts which 'represent stages in the history of the progress towards an Australian prose tradition,' a tradition which is, now, a historical entity abstractly constructed by the literary historian. The literary critic is able to imagine his museum and then proceed to dust off his classic and subsidiary examples while pretending that he only dusted off his examples and then discovered that they exist in a ready-made museum.

The *literary* history which the literary history constructs is a precariously confused sketch of a simultaneously abstract and concrete object. Why, then, have such versions of 'Australian fiction' maintained for so long their dominant place in controlling the key terms, genres, texts and personnel that make up the category 'Australian fiction'? The power of the literary history is deeply sedimented in the typical and habitual ways that writers, critics, readers, and so on, think about the literary field and perceive 'objects' in it. Agents in the literary field accept, reject or otherwise negotiate their position in or way through the field in terms that are determined by the practices, especially the textual practices, of previous agents in the field. It is because the literary history occupies a *position* of dominance that the confused sketch which it constructs has tended to be adopted by agents in the literary field or at least has tended to remain unquestioned. This position of dominance has little to do with the actual text of the literary history and much to do with the extra-textual credentials of those agents who produce them. But the durability and power of the literary history is also the result, in no small part, of the 'fleshing out' of the sketch, that is, the result of the unambiguously positive construction of the sketched 'literary history' in anthologies.

Australian short story anthologies typically wrestle with the sorts of chronological problems outlined in Barnes's sketch of 'Australian Fiction to 1920.' How far back does the critic draw the line in his or her selection of nineteenth-century texts? And, specifically in the short story anthology, how much weight does he or she give to the apparently distinctive nationalist concern – the so-called '*Bulletin* style' – of the short story as an originating characteristic of Australian fiction, and what consequences does this have for the construction of the anthology contents? The clearest symptom of these concerns in the Australian short story anthology appears in the concentrated attention paid to the question of 'selection,' an at-

tention that betrays the fluid status of the key terms, genres, texts and personnel of the sub-field. Selection is, as I have attempted to show in my analysis of Palgrave's ancestral anthology, a key move in the practice of constructing a literary category in the field. Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson deal with the matter almost immediately in their 1963 anthology, *A Century of Australian Short Stories*. In order to do this, they expose without resolving the problem of 'quality.' 'Short stories of any *quality*, dealing with Australia, began appropriately with a writer born in this country. This was John Lang (1816-1864). There were of course *earlier incidental* stories in newspapers.'<sup>13</sup> Quality is submerged here by the broad-brush prescription of characteristics necessary to qualify an *Australian* short story (the Australian short story writer, it appears, needs only to be born in and 'deal with' Australia). For Hadgraft and Wilson earlier stories by other writers become, by definition, incidental to the tradition which their anthology constructs. Sitting uncomfortably against their problematic and unresolved claim to represent quality short Australian fiction is the distinction between central and incidental stories, a distinction which turns on their version of the history of the genre which, they claim, began with John Lang.

Hadgraft and Wilson reject a huge volume of short stories from 1800 to 1880, relying on the undefined concept of 'quality,' in order to construct, as the title of their anthology suggests, a tradition of Australian short stories, a tradition which privileges the '*Bulletin* style':

[the '*Bulletin* style' of short story] was nearly always short, though some writers could be allowed latitude; it dealt with reality known at first hand, and this was often the outback; it was laconic; it depended much on understatement; sentiment was kept on a tight rein; and in dialogue and general atmosphere it was essentially Australian. (Hadgraft and Wilson, eds *A Century of Australian Short Stories*, xi)

Leaving aside the tautological characterisation of essentially Australian short stories as essentially Australian, the emphasis on economy here (stories are short, laconic, understated, tightly reined) merits some attention. Hadgraft and Wilson provide a generalised description of what they mean by quality (stories that are short, laconic, understated and tightly reined) and select their anthology con-



tents accordingly. But the '*Bulletin* style' on which they base this description and selection is itself a construction of the anthology, as their thumbnail sketch betrays. The kind of '*Bulletin* style' short stories Hadgraft and Wilson select are *nearly always* short, laconic, understated and keep sentiment on a tight rein although some writers *can be allowed* latitude.

Hadgraft and Wilson conveniently ignore the implications of the fact that various kinds of stories appeared in the *Bulletin* in the 1880s, including 'trite and stilted fiction,' 'parodies and illustrations guying the clichés of popular fiction' and the 'characteristically Australian' stories which flowed from 1888 on (xi). In their brief introductory sketch and the anthology contents that follow Hadgraft and Wilson conveniently suppress those other possible long, overstated, sentimental selections which would contradict their '*Bulletin* style.' In the process they become themselves the arbiters deciding which writers and stories constitute the style and 'the quality Australian short story' that is ostensibly derived from it.<sup>14</sup>

But in constructing one kind of Australian short story the alternative styles they reject are inescapably embedded in the tradition constituted by the anthology. Indeed, a rejection of previous and alternative styles is the fundamental move for the editors, enabling them to arbitrate and classify the genre of the Australian short story, by stating what their selection is *not*.<sup>15</sup> The stories not included are 'outmoded,' 'long-winded,' 'orotund,' 'the sentiment is lush' and 'the moralistic note rings loud and clear. The content is almost invariably conventional – in plot, dialogue, feeling, and attitude. Just as stock are the characters' (x). In other words, by definition, the stories not selected are opposed to the '*Bulletin* style' in terms of *conventional* features. What is interesting about the strategy used here is the way the features which are supposed to be characteristic of the '*Bulletin* style' become implicitly original, by contrast with the 'stock' or 'conventional' characteristics of its stylistic opposite. By defining the field in terms of its other, by reference to what it is *not*, Hadgraft and Wilson's rejection of conventional short stories (stories that are long-winded, orotund, lush) does double duty: the style promoted in their anthology becomes *the* style for quality Australian short stories (short, laconic, understated) as determined in their selection of actual content; and, by emphasising the conventionality of the sorts of stories which their anthology does not include, the *conventionality*

of their own content (conventionally short, laconic, understated stories) can be evaded.

Hadgraft and Wilson's anthology is a political and contestable construct, depending on their own description – that is reconstruction if not initial construction – of the '*Bulletin* short story ... [which] was in effect the real Australian short story of the period from about 1890 until World War I' (xii). Hadgraft and Wilson claim for themselves the capacity to define this object despite the fact that 'many stories that appeared in the *Bulletin* were not what we call typical *Bulletin* stories' (xii). What counts, in other words, as 'the real Australian short story' depends on 'what *we* call typical.' The anthology editors, in so calling, claim power over the object which their anthology legitimates. But embedded in this process of constructing 'the real Australian short story' are all those other stories, possible pretenders to the title, which need only the apparatus of an anthology in order to overthrow the '*Bulletin* short story' version with a new version of 'the real Australian short story.'

Having constituted the sub-field, or genre, 'the real Australian short story,' and their position in the field as the arbiters of this object, Hadgraft and Wilson proceed to the next move typical of anthology introductions, a move that follows Palgrave's 'natural growth and evolution.' This is to construct a model of the *development* of the genre. Hadgraft and Wilson's genre, as we have seen, is unified by the '*Bulletin* style' between about 1890 and World War I. In their history,

World War I may be put as the terminus to this first important period in the development of the Australian short story. After that it was to change, to become more sophisticated and to shift away from the outback .... There seems something of a hiatus between the ending of the *Bulletin* period and the thirties. The *link* is Vance Palmer. (xiii, emphasis added)

In constructing a history some kind of link between elements is essential in order to naturalise otherwise disparate material and synthesise it into an organic whole, called Australian short fiction. But the somewhat tentative qualification here – 'may be,' 'seems,' 'somewhat' – suggests Hadgraft and Wilson recognise the contestable nature of this next move but also obscures the reified status of their emphatically positive construction, now with a 'first impor-

tant period' which serves as the absolutely factual beginning to a positivist 'Australian short story.'

Harry Heseltine's *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories* is the most ambitious and explicit attempt in my random list of anthologies to lay claim to the right to constitute and consecrate the specific list of the Australian short story as well as to identify or at least assert custodial rights over the whole imaginary genre of the Australian short story. Heseltine's introduction usefully foregrounds the process by which anthologies naturalise and synthesise disparate material in order to 'accommodate' it in a 'tradition' or 'continuum' or 'coherent' whole.<sup>16</sup> Heseltine's project is, he admits, to present a 'practical exemplary history of short prose fiction in this country' (Heseltine, *Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*, 9). The positivist implications of such a project are, as Heseltine acknowledges, obvious. 'To claim for a set of twenty-five stories chronologically arranged the force of an exemplary history is clearly to assume that there is a history to be exemplified' (9). While he fails to come to terms with the function of his exemplars as definitive models, Heseltine does foreground the role of the editor in constructing various conditional 'versions' (11) of the genre. But in making explicit the conditional aspect of selection Heseltine neatly obscures the positivist assumption that the selection which represents his version of the genre is drawn from some larger imaginary, canonical body of possible short story choices rather than constituted by his selection itself.

Not surprisingly, Heseltine's positivist genre closely follows that of Hadgraft and Wilson, the traditional characteristics of the sub-field 'Australian short fiction' being well established by 1976.<sup>17</sup> The short story – an organic genre, with a 'source,' a 'development' and even a 'flowering' to prove it – 'has ... a discernible development beginning in the 1890s ... enjoying a second major flowering during the 1940s' (9), with Henry Lawson as 'the source of most that is imaginatively important in it' (11). Clearly, such a model informs Heseltine's editorial practice – it is this model that is constituted in the contents of his anthology<sup>18</sup> – and, presumably, necessitates the pre-emptive disclaimer that follows:

I wish to make it absolutely clear that any *interpretation* I offer of the rise of the Australian short story *grew out of*,

*did not dictate, the lengthy process of selection.* (12, emphasis added)

This disclaimer is unusual as a defensive strategy in anthology introductions in that it foregrounds the fundamental problem concerning the anthology as an 'interpretation,' a problem which is usually suppressed. Heseltine, by disclaiming responsibility for the 'constructedness' of his body of Australian short fiction, effectively foregrounds the key role of the anthology introduction and contents, dictated by the interpretation that he offers, in constituting his object in the literary field. To put this in terms of the agent, Heseltine foregrounds the status of the anthology as an artefact of his own subjective consciousness partially disguised as a positive object.

The artefactuality of Heseltine's anthology and the constituting force of his introduction ('force' being a term Heseltine uses) are further emphasised by his explicit problematising of the coherent tradition of the Australian short story genre and his attempt to resolve this problem. Constructing an Australian short story tradition, Heseltine admits, has its difficulties:

Hal Porter and Patrick White constitute obstacles to the *perception or proof* of an Australian short story tradition .... Indeed, perhaps the greatest challenge to historical criticism of the Australian short story is to *generate a reading* of its development which will accommodate Henry Lawson at one end of the continuum and Hal Porter and Patrick White at the other without misrepresenting [them and those who fall between them]. (12, emphasis added)

Beyond the usual reifying construction of a positive 'tradition,' 'development' and 'representation' of Australian short fiction (in this case by referring to the possibility of misrepresentation), Heseltine seems here to construct a more sophisticated practice for constituting the category he appears to represent by acknowledging that his introductory account 'generates a reading' of the genre, an acknowledgment that clearly contradicts his opening claim merely to 'present a practical exemplary history' back on page 9. Now on page 12 the tradition seems to have become problematic and dependent on a 'perspective' or '[p]erspectives [that] are available on the Australian short story' (12). But Heseltine submerges the radically subjective basis of these possible perspectives as soon as they

surface: the '[p]erspectives [that] are available on the Australian short story' it turns out 'afford its major representatives some kind of cultural coherence without either imposing on them new and perverse interpretations or absolutely disintegrating the old patterns of understanding' (12). Clearly Heseltine's project is not to disintegrate the tradition and construct a new one but to conserve a particular account of the Australian short story tradition which is not 'new and perverse.' Even when the tradition is the product of a 'generated reading' the anthology user is not following any kind of radical subjectivity, a 'generated reading' based on *Heseltine's* perspective, but one based on 'perspectives [that] are ... *discernible* in the twenty-five stories ... in this anthology' (12, emphasis added). Heseltine's 'perspectives' are regulated not by his subjective position in the field or by his subjective consciousness but by firm and positive entities which are 'really out there' after all.

Heseltine justifies these 'perspectives' as positive entities by sleight of hand, exactly on the basis of those already subjectively selective particular instances that he fails to acknowledge. The same kind of double vision – at once acknowledging and suppressing the radical subjectivity of his anthology – appears in the ambivalent conception of particular stories as obstacles to the '*perception or proof* of an Australian short story tradition.' The tradition, here, seems to be the product both of perception *and* proof, compressing together the radical plurality in the multiple possibilities of subjective perception with the evidential positivism of proof. While Heseltine seems to be having a bet each way here, his analysis (or, in my terms, construction) of the organically whole and coherent tradition of the Australian short story which follows suggests a fundamentally positivist conception.

How does Heseltine resolve the problem, when 'Hal Porter and Patrick White constitute obstacles to the perception or proof of an Australian short story tradition'? In a move reminiscent of the New Critics, a move practised by editors of pedagogical anthologies – like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Warren in *Understanding Fiction* as I shall attempt to show in Chapter Six, he discovers apparently contradictory elements in various short stories which are, it turns out, coherent, that is, can be synthesised into coherent elements in an organic tradition. Heseltine's tradition, briefly, involves stories by

writers who 'fill the gaps' between Henry Lawson, Katherine Susannah Prichard and Hal Porter, on the basis that:

a subordination [of the imagination to the pressure of the actual] ... has been endemic in our shorter fiction .... [T]he experienced quality of reality has, in effect, rendered the imagination superfluous (31).

It seems odd, at first glance, that Porter's flamboyantly imaginative fiction style should be synthesised into such a characterisation of Australian short fiction. But it turns out, as Heseltine explains, that Henry Lawson, Katherine Susannah Prichard and Hal Porter share the same fundamental characteristic: a reliance on 'authenticating experience' (13). Lawson's austere understatement

might [and for Heseltine actually *does*] serve as a paradigm for Australian realism which forgoes the effects of the imagination because language adequately applied to the quality of experience is already more than enough (19);

while

[i]n the interlocking of ... her greed for authenticating information and her trust in language to turn that information into art ... Katherine Susannah Prichard defined her central place in the Australian tradition of short prose narrative (22);

and with a

writer [like Hal Porter,] who subordinates his imagination to his own reality (of words), who is greedy for abundance and information, who reveals himself as good without ever having been innocent, such a writer we can now see as peculiarly representative of our whole national experience (27; see also 13).<sup>19</sup>

The point in examining Heseltine's construction here of 'the Australian short story tradition' is not to accuse him in particular of some kind of hoax, or to discern in the practice of critics like him some kind of conspiracy. Rather, it is to show how any apparently descriptive account of an object, like 'the Australian short story tradition,' is one practice (usually one of several) that actually brings about that object. And, in so far as that account claims for itself and consequently has conferred on it the status of authenticity as a reli-

able explanation for that object, a conferring that follows from the use to which the account is put over time, that object will maintain its social power, or value, as though it is absolute and positive. The interesting thing about Heseltine's construction of his 'Australian short story tradition' is that he deploys as though a positive element the very concept of authenticity which it is his project to construct: his account appears to be authenticated because he seizes for himself the right to make judgements on authenticity. And what measures authenticity is information, which sounds like a hard category of positivist evidence, not imagination, which sounds like the wishy-washy sort of subjectivity literary critics of the New Critical variety used to try to avoid.

Heseltine synthesises his three major Australian short fiction writers by a rhetorical appeal to their shared horror of imagination and devotion to 'reality,' 'information' and 'experience' – a cluster of terms which can be thought of as synonymous and which Heseltine compresses into synonyms in his conclusion on page 31 (quoted above). The weight of Heseltine's rhetorical strategy rests most heavily on his compression of Porter's dubiously non-imaginative 'reality (of words)' into 'information,' words becoming somehow things that exist outside imagination, and on his rhetorical compression of the flimsy conception of writerly greed – Prichard's unsubstantiated 'greed for authenticating information' and Porter's 'greed for abundance and information' put them in the same boat as Lawson.

By privileging 'authentic experience' over 'imagination' Heseltine is able to make Porter, whose style presents a potential obstacle in his developmental model of the Australian short story, as he acknowledges, into a major element and, by the way, positions Heseltine as the critic who holds the power to construct and consecrate the list of writers and stories which constitute the Australian short story as an apparently positive and now organic object. Heseltine's readiness to find a 'deep' structural characteristic – a kind of family resemblance – with which to construct his object finds a different expression in his important 1962 essay, 'The Literary Heritage,' a major articulation of his strategic claim in the literary field to the position of the 'canon maker.' 'The Literary Heritage' appeared in *Meanjin* at a time when the debate about 'Australian literature' – its content, value and personnel – and the role of university

departments of English in determining what kind of Australian Literature should be studied, if any should be studied at all, was at its height.<sup>20</sup>

Heseltine's claim in the essay to the authority to speak on behalf of some kind of 'Australian literary heritage' is a form of positioning in the literary field. The essay, in other words, is a staking of his claim to the power to authorise 'our most accomplished literary works' (Heseltine, 'Literary Heritage,' 154), that is, to decide on 'our monuments' or what counts in the field. But it is also a staking of a claim to the central place of the literary field over all other fields in 'the continuing definition of ourselves to ourselves through the forms of literature' (154), a claim that emphasises the nationalising function of 'literature.' To ask whether or not Heseltine's second claim, a kind of 'ambit claim,' was ever taken seriously by agents operating outside the literary field is less important than to ask what function such a claim serves inside the literary field. To claim the centrality of one's object – Australian literature – as the overdetermining thing which defines 'ourselves' in all other fields has the effect of implying at least the centrality of that object in the literary field and, by extension, of implying the centrality of Heseltine in that field. Having done this, Heseltine sets out 'to construct a version of our literary heritage which will do justice to whatever discoverable complexity and force are latent in it, and at the same time will not disavow its Australianness' (156).

The typical ambivalence in Heseltine's methodology should, by now, be apparent. Just as he does in his introduction to *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*, Heseltine at once exposes the subjective basis of his practice to 'construct a version' and conceals it again in the reifying objectivity announced by the concept of 'discoverable' evidence which is now 'latent' in this object. Heseltine's 'literature' is characterised by 'complexity and force,' characteristics which are valued for good professional reasons. Heseltine constructs a 'literary heritage' which depends on the sorts of skilled close reading which literary critics know how to do and are paid to teach. But in order to strengthen his double claim both subjectively to 'construct a version' and objectively to 'discover evidence of the latent complexity and force' of 'Australian literature' Heseltine makes an additional move. Complexity, he suggests,



might disavow or repudiate the 'Australianness' of his object, implying that 'Australianness' is, by definition, 'simple.'

Reference to the problematic complexity of what should be a 'simple Australian heritage' might seem counter-productive. But Heseltine turns the problem on its head in order to repudiate *simpleness*. What is 'Australian,' it turns out, is *really complex*.

The canon of our writing presents a facade of mateship, egalitarian democracy, landscape, nationalism, realistic toughness. But always behind the facade looms the fundamental concern of the Australian literary imagination. That concern, marked out by our national origins and given direction by geographic necessity, is to acknowledge the terror at the basis of being, to explore its uses, and to build defences against its dangers. It is that concern which gives Australia's literary heritage its special force and distinction, which guarantees its continuing modernity. (166)

Heseltine shifts the usual defining characteristics of 'Australian fiction,' including the 'realistic toughness' which he was later to make central in his Penguin anthology of 1976, to the periphery in order to baptise a more complex 'concern of the Australian literary imagination,' a fascination with 'terror.' The importance of this 'modernist' concern is that it fitted 'Australian literature' into the then current model of European fiction which, at the time of Heseltine's essay, privileged texts which expressed some kind of nihilism or existentialism at the expense of 'Romantic optimism' (158).

Heseltine's 'complex Australian literary heritage,' then, accomplishes several things: it constructs a positive object suited to the needs of academic teacher-critics; it constructs this object in a category with European and modernist credentials; and it positions Heseltine as the baptiser of the 'real Australian literature.' What is common to Heseltine's objectifying and canonising projects, a fundamental characteristic of the 'teacher-critic' in the literary field, is his willingness to deploy different frameworks, or 'perspectives' which become 'proofs,' with which to construct his object. The 1962 essay emphasises the fundamental imaginative fascination with terror and a rejection of 'reality,' the anthology disposes of 'imagination' and emphasises the fundamental position of the 'reality' of 'authentic experience.' Whichever framework he chooses,

however, the critic who decides what counts maintains his central position and consecrating power in the literary field.

Leonie Kramer has been one of the most influential teacher-critics in the literary field. Her influence is the result of the wide institutional power which she possesses as an academic and popular critical commentator, an editor and a jury member for various literary awards. The institutional leverage of her *Oxford History of Australian Literature* – a project which bears the double authority of Kramer and Oxford – on perceptions of 'Australian literature' deserves a study in itself. I shall, however, restrict my analysis here to Kramer's massive two-volume 'coffee table' anthology, *My Country. Australian Poetry and Short Stories: Two Hundred Years*. In her brief introduction to the two volumes Kramer deploys every characteristic move of the anthology introduction after Palgrave in order to sketch her object. 'Literature' is, first of all, a 'represented' object, characterised by fiction and poetry. The sorts of text which are not 'represented' are 'records, journals, diaries and descriptions,' which appear to be the only genres writers could manage during the 'struggle to survive' in the colonial years, and which are simply assumed to be subordinate to the poetry and fiction that begin the contents of the anthology.<sup>21</sup> And the absence of early poetry or short fiction from the anthology, of course, proves her case, but more than this it constructs Kramer's 'Australian literature' by means of a simple suppression: 'Australian literature' is not evident in records, journals, diaries and descriptions. What, then, fills this category? 'The works have been selected to show how writers ... have responded to a variety of experiences and how well they have expressed their observations and impressions for a very diverse audience' (Kramer, *My Country*. Vol. I, x). Oddly enough, 'literature,' for Kramer, gets back to a kind of recording ('expressing observations and impressions') with the addition of some subjectivity and diversity which has become, somehow, fictional or poetic, presumably because a fictional or poetic kind of responsiveness to 'a variety of experiences' results from the luxury afforded to writers who are no longer struggling to survive.

Kramer's introduction, for all its brevity, is loaded with this kind of dense and ambiguous thinking. The selection, on the one hand appearing to result from the emphasis on 'response to a variety of experiences,' in fact determines on the other what counts as a

'response' in the first place and what kinds of experience are judged to have been worth responding to. The selected 'works' constitute an organic whole, being on the one hand 'arranged chronologically, but' on the other 'no strict progression is implied' (x). Kramer remains ambivalent about the function of her text: '[t]here is a predominance of stories dealing with the bush and country life, as though to insist that this is where "the real Australian" is to be found' (xiii). Again, she suppresses the fact that the 'predominance of bush stories' is the product of her selection – the predominance is a simply positive fact – yet infers the subjectivity of this fact, '*as though* to insist.' Even here, however, her positivist view helps to obscure the subjective editorial function, suggesting that we ought to ask *what* is it that insists 'that this is where "the real Australian" is to be found'? The answer, of course, is that it is the apparently objective anthology contents that insist. But this avoids the other possible and more revealing question, *who* is it who insists? To ask this and answer – that it is Leonie Kramer who insists – is to expose the subjective status of the anthology selection which she takes such pains to conceal.

Submerged in her introduction are the three key claims that characterise the anthology introduction and, while Kramer confuses or shifts into the background the usual concern with representation, the organic unity of her object and the whole problem of 'literature' as 'the best,' she does foreground the claim that Australian short story anthologies define the national identity. Her nation is, apparently like her whole project, an emphatically positive one: '[w]riters ... are like explorers, in that they bring to light observations ... and produce individual maps of the terrain they traverse' (Kramer, *My Country*. Vol. II, xi). Besides suggesting that 'Australian literature' is a colonial branch of European literature, Kramer's colonising trope itself helps to construct her nationalism. *My Country* constructs her object while appearing to explore it: the anthology becomes the map of those texts which have appeared on an apparently otherwise blank pre-colonial surface. *My Country*, as the appropriation in the title implies, is an emphatically European one, in which Kramer's 'map' is at once her constitution of 'writing in English' as 'one of the cultural gains of colonialism' (*My Country*, Vol. I, xi), her claim to the right of possession of this object, and her consecration of it by her selection.

What I have called the 'sleight of hand' construction of the positivist object – 'The Australian short story' – in Australian short story anthologies suggests some kind of conscious conspiracy in the work of various teacher-critic-editors like Hadgraft and Wilson, Heseltine or Kramer, emphasising the power of the agent in the process of canon formation. How much the process is a consciously strategic one is, however, impossible to establish and, as I have attempted to show in Part One, irrelevant. Regardless of their intentions, the practices of agents in the literary or any other field have unintentional and constrained consequences.<sup>22</sup> For example, the practices of a series of editors and publishers in constituting 'The Works of Shakespeare,' whatever the intended consequences, have resulted in the construction of an institution in which Shakespeare has become an extremely valuable cultural and professional academic asset and a major feature in the reproduction of the matrix of practices which sustain the power of 'authors,' as distinct from writers of texts, and individual 'works,' as distinct from texts, as I attempted to show in Chapter Two. Similarly, the fact that specific actors in the field have had more or less freedom as agents to direct how the field operates does not diminish the institutional nature of the ongoing practices that also operate in the field. And it is exactly the institutional interdependence of anthologies that I wish to consider next in order to show how specific editors and publishers construct a 'natural chronology' for the genre, 'Australian short fiction.'

Roughly speaking, the organic and positive object called 'Australian short fiction' 'develops' or else 'flowers' in three stages, in the 1890s, the 1940s and the 1970s. This chronology and the organic metaphor that controls it gain currency through repeated use in short story anthologies. Let me show how this works in two recent cases, Kerry Goldsworthy's 1983 *Australian Short Stories* and Laurie Hergenhan's 1986 *The Australian Short Story: A Collection, 1890s – 1990s*. Both anthologies promote the developmental model of 'Australian short fiction.' For Goldsworthy

[t]he stories ... have been chosen partly to reflect the three roughly identifiable short-story 'booms' in Australia ... the 1890's [sic] ... the 1940's [sic] short story ... that dominate[d] Australian fiction ... [and] the 1970's [sic] new generation.  
(Goldsworthy, *Australian Short Stories*, x-xi)

For Hergenhan the

supposed progenitor [of the Australian short story is] Henry Lawson [and] there is a long line of distinguished short story writers extending from the 1890s to the present. (Hergenhan, *The Australian Short Story: 1890s – 1990s*, xi)

The *Bulletin* origin, as I argued above, is itself a contested notion, as Hergenhan's evasive 'supposed progenitor' implies, but both anthologies, strangely, depend on and in turn maintain it. This is strange because both, in the spirit of the times, are self-conscious attempts at canon formation or canon revision.

Goldsworthy and Hergenhan each spend considerable time discussing selection and organisation, both typical concerns in anthology introductions. Goldsworthy selects material with 'the desire for some kind of chronological coherence in showing the development of the Australian short story; ... presenting as wide a spectrum ... as possible' (Goldsworthy, *Australian Short Stories*, xviii) in order 'to establish and maintain certain kinds of continuity and ... to illustrate some general ideas and observations about the Australian short story' and organises the selection chronologically, according to the writer's birth date (x). Hergenhan selects "representative' stories ... to concentrate on authors who have made an important contribution to the form of the short story as practised in Australia' and '[t]o make th[e] development apparent to readers I have arranged the stories chronologically according to first publication' (Hergenhan, *The Australian Short Story: 1890s – 1990s*, xii).

Clearly, both editors use the same strategies: both select texts on the basis of a model – Goldsworthy produces a 'coherence,' 'certain kinds of continuity and ... some general ideas,' Hergenhan produces apparently problematic 'representative' stories but also unproblematic 'important contributions to the form of the short story;' both organise their selections chronologically in order to reify a developmental model; and both suppress the grounds by which they determined this development – it remains unclear how either editor attaches value to 'coherence' or 'width' or on what grounds a 'contribution' is 'important' in their constructions of Australian short fiction. And while Hergenhan's 'important contributions to' the Australian short story is less evasive than Goldsworthy's vague 'wide spectrum' and 'general ideas,' neither editor acknowledges the fundamentally subjective basis of the attitudes or strategic decisions

which determine their respective contents. Both assume that the 'spectrum' or 'important contributions' simply appeared somehow on the editorial desk.

Goldsworthy's introduction differs from Hergenhan's, however, in the attention she pays to the explicit revision of the supposed content of the Australian short story and the function of the anthology in the attention she pays to uncovering the obscured but positively objective fact that Australian fiction has, it turns out, always dealt with female experience:

a *survey* of Australian short fiction *reveals* that its writers, both male and female, have *always* been equally concerned with female experience of Australian life, or, indeed, female experience in general. One of the purposes of this anthology is *to demonstrate* that concern: *to attempt to redress* the balance of a popular imagination which sees male figures and male experience as predominant in Australian life. (Goldsworthy, *Australian Short Stories*, xvi, emphasis added)

While Goldsworthy's 'survey' which 'reveals' evidence functions in the same positivist vein as Kramer's mapping exercise, the ambiguity in at once 'demonstrating' the features of a positive object and 'attempting to redress' the imbalance in the imagination that determines the subjective perception of that object recalls the kind of ambivalence that is a characteristic of Heseltine's methodology. Goldsworthy's claim is that her anthology observes some significant new evidence in the field of Australian short fiction. As a result,

some dark horses have been included at the expense of favourites ... because such a race is always more interesting than one in which the outcome is predictable, and ... because of some recent and significant changes in the condition of the track. (xviii)

The function of the racing metaphor is interesting here: Goldsworthy's revisionist project clearly involves a recognition of the political basis of selection (she refers to 'inclusion' and 'representation') and of the fact that the short story anthology has, until recently, been a certain kind of race characterised by the sort of content I have reviewed above. And her view of anthologies as vehicles for inclusion and exclusion, allowing 'most of the well-known Australian writers of short fiction [to be] represented here'

(x), suggests that her desired 'outcome' is, presumably, the greater inclusion of fiction by and/or about women. But her metaphor conceals, as usual, as much as it reveals. The anthology, it seems, describes some 'recent and significant changes in the condition of the track,' but the tracks on which short stories run are always and only the ones provided by publications like Goldsworthy's own anthology. By ignoring this Goldsworthy submerges her own responsibility for constructing the track and makes the track appear to be a natural and positive feature of the literary field when, in fact, the anthology, the choices and the contests embedded in it constitute 'the track,' 'the race' and 'the horses' running in it.

For all her foregrounded claim to canon revision, Goldsworthy's selection is as conservative as Hergenhan's. In terms of content, there is considerable overlap in the personnel selected in the two anthologies. Goldsworthy (with twenty-six writers) and Hergenhan (with thirty-three) select nineteen in common: Barbara Baynton, Henry Lawson, Henry Handel Richardson, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Christina Stead, Alan Marshall, John Morrison, Gavin Casey, Hal Porter, Dal Stevens, Patrick White, Peter Cowan, Thelma Forshaw, Elizabeth Jolley, Morris Lurie, Frank Moorhouse, Murray Bail, Michael Wilding and Peter Carey. Goldsworthy's anthology, while ostensibly revisionary, selects only three pre-*Bulletin* writers, and ends with the five 'Balmain School' writers whose reputations were already established by Brian Kiernan's 1977 *The Most Beautiful Lies. A Collection of Stories by Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers: Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding*, an anthology I shall examine in detail later. Hergenhan follows her lead but manages, admittedly with a larger volume, to select more dark horses: Olga Masters, Beverley Farmer, Fay Zwicky, Barry Hill, Gerald Murnane, Archie Weller, Thea Astley, Helen Garner, Lily Brett and Susan Hampton.

Both anthologies organise their selections according to the three periods or 'flowerings' which they nominate in their introductions as the turning points in the development of the Australian short story, the 1890s, the 1940s and the 1970s, although Goldsworthy adds three pre-*Bulletin* stories and Hergenhan adds a 1980s phase. Both, in other words, adopt the regular model of the Australian short story which privileges the '*Bulletin* style' origins of the genre, as established by earlier anthologies like those of Hadgraft and

Wilson, and Heseltine. In terms of content, however, both anthologies give considerable space to short stories written by 'the 1940s' writers: of Goldsworthy's twenty-six writers, fourteen were published in the 1940s; of Hergenhan's thirty-three, twelve were published in the 1940s. Devoting more than half of her anthology to stories by writers from the 1940s, Goldsworthy institutes quite literally her contention that 'the 1940s short story dominated Australian fiction,' while Hergenhan's provision of only one third of the anthology for 1940s stories allows him to give greater emphasis to contemporary material, in keeping with his project to institute 'a long line of distinguished short story writers extending from the 1890s to the present.' But there is more to the constitution of the 1940s 'flowering' than this.

The selection of particular 1940s writers in the two anthologies seems to be strongly determined by Beatrice Davis's 1967 *Short Stories of Australia: The Moderns*, an anthology that consecrates the 1940s style, or what could be called the 'Coast to Coast style.'<sup>23</sup> In *The Moderns*, Davis stakes her, at first glance, oppositional claim to define what counts as contemporary Australian short fiction in the literary field, a claim that is all the more interesting for the fact that, at second glance, the contents and terms of the struggle between the 'old' fiction and its 'new' successor turn out to be institutionally located in and controlled by the two volumes of *Short Stories of Australia*, the old establishment in volume one, *The Lawson Tradition*, and the new opposition in volume two, *The Moderns*.

*The Moderns* attempts to show in what new or different directions the short story in Australia has developed since 1940 .... [T]here will be found a distinct change in approach from that of most of the writers in the first volume [that is, Douglas Stewart's *Short Stories of Australia*:] *The Lawson Tradition*. (Davis, ed. *Short Stories of Australia*, vii)

Davis's description of her selected material constructs, in her terms, a 'new' style which is characteristically personal and concerned with relationships rather than with epic accounts, thereby strategically marking off the boundary between Stewart's 'old' establishment tradition and her 'new' modern style. The anthologies of Goldsworthy and Hergenhan work with this boundary: ten of Goldsworthy's fourteen 1940s writers were selected by Davis; while ten of Hergenhan's



twelve appeared in *The Moderns*. Christina Stead is the one selection to appear in both anthologies not determined by Davis's model.<sup>24</sup> The stories that comprise the evidence of 'the *Coast to Coast* style' 'to be found' in Davis's anthology clearly constitute the 'new and different directions' and 'distinct change of approach' which she seeks to privilege in the sub-field of Australian short fiction. But it is in the way this evidence is taken up by anthologies which follow, like Goldsworthy's and Hergenhan's, that the contents of the field – its texts and personnel – are maintained.

The selection of largely the same personnel, or canonical writers, from anthology to anthology in the sub-field of Australian short fiction indicates that the conservatism of Goldsworthy and Hergenhan is not unusual. A sample of sixty short story anthologies published between 1950 and 1995 which select material by Australian writers (broadly speaking, material written by or about Australians or written in Australia) indicates that between one third and one half of the writers selected in each anthology appear with some frequency (see Table 1 below).<sup>25</sup> While the figures reproduced below indicate this pattern, it should be remembered that material by infrequently selected writers makes up roughly half or more of the contents of most short story anthologies. Only writers who have made five or more appearances in the sixty anthologies have been listed, for the purpose of indicating which writers are most often anthologised, particularly in order to highlight the frequency of selection of some writers – Henry Lawson, Hal Porter, Frank Moorhouse, Vance Palmer, Peter Carey. The figures for each writer indicate the number of times a story is selected, usually once in individual anthologies but sometimes up to five times. Frequency of selection has been cross-matched against the number of pages devoted to each writer in Stephen Torre's *The Australian Short Story – 1940-1980: A Bibliography*.<sup>26</sup> There is a high correlation between my sample anthology selection and Torre's bibliographic register of publication activity by and about short story writers. Torre's *Bibliography* lists first publications, short story collections, anthologies and review or critical articles. Frequently anthologised writers usually receive one and up to seven pages of bibliographic reference in Torre's *Bibliography*. A low correlation occurs for some writers, of course, because Torre's *Bibliography* indicates little publication activity for nineteenth-century writers (usually with no pages listed) and post-1980s writers

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Anthology selection of Australian short story writers</b>		
<b>Writer</b>	<b>Frequency of selection</b>	<b>Volume by pages in Torre's <i>Bibliography</i></b>
Abdullah/Matthew	7	1
E. Anderson	10	2
J. Anderson	5	0
T. Astley	16	1
M. Bail	20	1.5
M. Barnard	16	1
B. Baynton	17	0
D. Campbell	5	2
<b>P. Carey</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>
G. Casey	13	4
P. Cowan	22	3.5
V. Daley	10	0
F. D. Davison	12	2.5
H. Drake-Brockmann	5	1.5
E. Dyson	11	0
B. Farmer	15	0.25
T. Forshaw	8	2
H. Garner	16	0.25
K. Grenville	15	0.25
M. Halligan	7	0
B. Hanrahan	11	0
F. Hardy	8	3
E. Harrower	10	0.5
S. Hazzard	8	0.5
X. Herbert	5	1
B. James	9	6
E. Jolley	21	1.5
<b>H. Lawson</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0</b>
M. Lurie	22	2.5
D. Malouf	8	0.25
C. Mann	6	1.5
J. Manifold	7	0
A. Marshall	22	6.5
O. Masters	18	0.25
H. McCrae	5	1
<b>F. Moorhouse</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6.5</b>
J. Morrison	25	5
G. Murnane	6	0.25
B. Oakley	8	2
D. O'Grady	6	2
<b>V. Palmer</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>H. Porter</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7</b>
K. S. Prichard	17	3
H. H. Richardson	17	0
S. Rudd	21	0
E. Schlunke	17	5
C. Stead	19	1.5
D. Stewart	5	1.5
D. Stivens	25	6.5
'Tasma'	6	0
M. Trist	6	3
P. Warung	13	0
J. Waten	20	3.5
P. White	23	2.5
M. Wilding	26	6.5
J. Wright	19	1.5
F. Zwicky	10	0.25

Source: figures drawn from sample of sixty short story anthologies published between 1950 and 1995 which select material by Australian writers indexed against volume pages in Stephen Torre, *The Australian Short Story - 1940-1980: A Bibliography*. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984.

(usually with one-quarter of a page listed) and because Torre lists the contents of collected stories, tending to over-emphasise some writers whose short stories were published primarily in collections.

While the anthology introduction is one mechanism that constructs its object, prescribing as a natural condition the positively objective, organic and representative 'literature' which it appears to describe, frequency of selection, as tabulated here, is another mechanism in the establishment and maintenance of certain writers and 'schools,' constructed in the physical contents of anthologies over time. The '*Bulletin* style,' for example, is constructed massively (and almost single-handedly) in the anthology selection of Henry Lawson with sixty appearances, assisted by Price Warung with thirteen and Steele Rudd with twenty-one. Selections in the high teens of writers working, roughly speaking, in the 1940s indicate the solid anthologising of the '*Coast to Coast* style.' The distinctive frequency with which 1980s 'Women Writers' are selected – for example, Thea Astley, Beverley Farmer, Kate Grenville, (each fifteen times), Barbara Hanrahan (ten times), Elizabeth Jolley (twenty-one times), Olga Masters (eighteen times) and Fay Zwicky (ten times) – indicates the successful revision of the canon as a result of the constitution of the category, 'Women's Writing,' while the remarkable rate at which the 'Balmain School' writers appear – Murray Bail (twenty times), Peter Carey (twenty-eight times), Morris Lurie (twenty-two times), Frank Moorhouse (thirty times – third in frequency after Lawson and Porter) and Michael Wilding (twenty-six times) – likewise suggests the successful establishment of the school after Brian Kiernan's anthology, *The Most Beautiful Lies*. Such a high frequency, however, is partly explained by the recent publishing move towards the strategic representation of schools of writers in anthologies in which editors select between three and five stories by writers. Kiernan's anthology, for example, with five stories by each writer partly accounts for the high frequency of selections of stories by Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding.

While some Australian short story anthologies devote up to half of their contents to infrequently selected writers, producing some random effects, the table above indicates that the contents of most are generally conservative and maintain a familiar list of writers. This is despite the typical introductory claims that anthologies recognise, to use Goldsworthy's metaphor quoted above, 'recent and

significant changes in the condition of the track.' Some anthologies, however, deliberately construct different contents in order to revise the category of Australian short fiction or, put another way, the Australian literary canon – or at least the canonical list of Australian short fiction writers. In doing so they do what all anthologies do – circumscribe and lay claim to the terrain of Australian short fiction in the literary field – but in the way they establish an oppositional history in their introductions and in their construction of new contents they attempt to consecrate new personnel and a revised canon. Two of the most successful revisions, which are the focus of Chapter Five, have constituted new categories in the sub-field: historical and contemporary 'Australian Women's Writing' and the fiction and personnel of 'The Balmain School.'

---

<sup>1</sup> Gary Catalano, 'The Need for Taste,' *Island*, 27 (Winter, 1986) 32.

<sup>2</sup> The anthology 'apologia' is Don Anderson's term. See Don Anderson, 'The Revenge of Narrative?' *Australian Book Review*, 176, (November, 1995) 48. The paradox implicit in a 'ground-breaking opposition' being at the same time an addition to a tradition will be dealt with in my discussion of 'canon revision' or reconstruction in Chapter Five.

<sup>3</sup> On canon formation see Chapter Three, 110-14.

<sup>4</sup> The latest updated version of *The Golden Treasury*, edited by Edward Leeson, explicitly recognises the canonising function of the anthology: 'the character of English poetry anthologies has been moulded, directly and indirectly, and to a remarkable degree' by *The Golden Treasury*. See Edward Leeson, ed. *The New Golden Treasury of English Verse*. London: Macmillan, 1980, xix. Leeson's edition, unlike Palgrave's, includes poets living at the time of publication and brings the selection up to Ted Hughes. Some mid- to late-nineteenth-century poets are dropped and the enthusiastic representation of others, the Rossettis for example, pared back.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Palgrave, ed. *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1861, vii.

<sup>6</sup> The ancestral metaphor is used quite specifically by editors, usually to suggest the pedigreed quality of their anthology. In relation to *The Golden Treasury*, for example, Arthur Quiller-Couch acknowledges his debt to Palgrave's anthology in selecting his own *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900*. See Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed. *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1900.

<sup>7</sup> I will attempt to show the function of the sales pitch in my discussion of 'Women's Writing' and 'The Balmain School.' See Chapter Five.

<sup>8</sup> Tony Davies makes this point in 'Education, Ideology and Literature,' in Tony Bennett, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott, eds *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*. London: Batsford/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981, 256.

<sup>9</sup> The literary history is deployed as a territorial claim over the literary field by critics on 'the left' as much as 'the right.' See, for example, Geoffrey Serle's radical nationalist 'history,' *From Deserts the Prophets Come*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1973 reissued as *The Creative Spirit in Australia: A Cultural History*, 1987 and Leonie Kramer's New Critical/Leavisite 'history,' *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the volumes edited by Serle and Kramer, noted above, and Laurie Hargenhan, ed. *The New Literary History of Australia*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988, J. Maclaren, *Australian Literature: An Historical Introduction*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1989 and W. H. Wilde, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1985. It would be worth examining the causes of the proliferation (and in the case of Serle the reissuing) of such 'histories' in the 1980s, perhaps in part a publishing response to the critical embracing of Australian texts, reflected in the rise of 'Australian Literature' undergraduate courses, and to a perceived market demand for 'Australiana' in the years leading up to and following the bicentennial celebrations of white settlement. Every history constructs a predominantly Eurocentric account of 'Australian writing.'

<sup>11</sup> Writing in 1951 Barnes was not alone in his tendency towards evaluation. For a problematising of the question of literary value and an account of the problematics of evaluation see Barbara Hernstein Smith, 'Contingencies of Value,' *Critical Inquiry*, 10 (September, 1983) 1-35, Steven Connor, *Theory and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> John Barnes, 'Australian Fiction to 1920,' in Geoffrey Dutton, ed. *The Literature of Australia*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1964, 134.

<sup>13</sup> Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson, eds *A Century of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1963, ix, emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup> For a brief description of the emergence and historical functions of the *Bulletin*, of the various kinds of fiction published in it over time and of the various political contests played out in its pages see David Carter and Gillian Whitlock, 'Institutions of Australian Literature,' in James Walter, ed. *Australian Studies: A Survey*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1989.

<sup>15</sup> The strategy of defining objects in a field, and one's position and claim to power, in negative terms, according to a Derridean form of 'not-statement,' is discussed by Anne Freedman in 'Anyone for Tennis?' in Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994. 'Starting from the class of all texts, or discourse,' Freedman argues, 'the not-statement is the first move establishing a generic

classification. Indeed, it is the first move establishing the very postulate of genre.' 51-2. Freadman appears to have suppressed, or not stated, the Derridaean origins of her theory.

<sup>16</sup> The terms are Heseltine's. See Harry Heseltine, ed. *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1976, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Hadgraft and Wilson's anthology collects together the stories of thirty-two writers; Heseltine's collects twenty-five. Nineteen of these writers appear in both anthologies, indicating a close correlation in the selection of the 'canonical personnel,' perhaps 'saints' is a better term, whose work typifies the traditional Australian short story of Hadgraft and Wilson and Heseltine. In keeping with their 'history' of the genre, Hadgraft and Wilson include four stories by Lawson (their paradigm 'Bulletin style' writer) and two by Palmer (the writer who provides the 'link,' resolving the tricky 'hiatus' between their 'Bulletin style' and the 'more sophisticated' style after 1918).

<sup>18</sup> Heseltine begins with stories by Price Warung, Steele Rudd, Lawson, Baynton and Edward Dyson in 'The Bulletin style,' includes Katherine Susannah Prichard, Vance Palmer, Frank Dalby Davison, Marjorie Barnard, Gavin Casey, E. O. Schlunke, John Morrison and Hal Porter, that is the major mid-century 'flowers,' and ends with some 'Balmain School' stories by Frank Moorhouse, Michael Wilding and Peter Carey.

<sup>19</sup> Heseltine's claim that Porter – and by extension the anthology itself – represents 'our whole national experience' is, as I attempted to show above in my analysis of Palgrave's strategic claim to characterise a 'national' literature for an imperial audience, a typical move in the genre of anthology introductions.

<sup>20</sup> Two of the key essays in this argument were A. D. Hope's, 'Australian Literature and the Universities' and Heseltine's 'The Literary Heritage.' Both have been reprinted in Jenny Lee, Philip Mead and Gerald Murnane, eds *The Temperament of Generations: Fifty Years of Writing in Meanjin*. Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1990.

<sup>21</sup> Leonie Kramer, ed. *My Country. Australian Poetry and Short Stories: Two Hundred Years. Vol. I*. Sydney: Lansdowne, 1985, xi.

<sup>22</sup> Anthony Giddens makes this useful distinction between prompted, discursive, conscious intention and the unintended consequences of action, emphasising as well the constraining force of unconscious or unacknowledged conditions on action. See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984, xxii-xxv and 280-85 and Chapter One above, 38-44.

<sup>23</sup> Beatrice Davis was closely associated with *Coast to Coast* and edited the 1942 edition.

<sup>24</sup> While the selection of personnel by Goldsworthy and Hergenhan closely follows Davis's *The Moderns*, the editors generally choose alternative stories, Goldsworthy following Davis's choice only once and Hergenhan three times. It may well be that the editors tend to do so as a way of masking the otherwise conservative function of their anthologies.

<sup>25</sup> For the purposes of estimating frequency of selection I have excluded anthologies of selected texts by single writers. Needless to say, anthologising single writers like Henry Lawson maintains his dominance of what is usually called 'the traditional Australian short story.' See, for example, Colin Roderick's popular and frequently reprinted school anthology, *Henry Lawson: Fifteen Stories*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1959.

<sup>26</sup> See Stephen Torre, *The Australian Short Story – 1940-1980: A Bibliography*. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984.

# 5

## **'Beautiful Lies': the establishment of 'Australian Women's writing' and 'The Balmain School'**

[P]ublication has depended upon some form of selection process, as indeed it does within this very anthology. Not everyone gets into print, and those who do, must meet certain criteria.

Dale Spender<sup>1</sup>

This anthology ... is something of a map of social concerns.

Frank Moorhouse<sup>2</sup>

During the Australian short story anthology boom of the 1980s, writers, editors, publishers and critics engaged in two successful interventions in the literary field to establish two new categories, namely, the broadly characterised genre of 'Australian women's writing' and the more tightly specified texts and personnel of 'The Balmain School.' The construction and consecration of these new categories was, I shall try to show, highly dependent on anthologies. It is probable that such interventions were responsive to shifts in other fields to do with, for example, the growing political credit of feminism, in the case of 'Australian Women's Writing,' or to do with the declining cultural credit of modernism, in the case of 'The Balmain School.' My concern here, however, is not to show which over-determining social practices stimulated changes in the literary field but to show how anthologies of Australian short fiction brought certain personnel, specific content and broad genres to prominence in the literary field.

### **'AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WRITING'**

The 1980s construction of the category of short fiction called 'Australian women's writing' depended on two moves, each made by means of anthologies: the retrospective constructing of a historical tradition of short fiction by Australian women; and the instituting of a canon of generically characteristic contemporary short fiction by Australian women. Both of these moves, broadly speaking, were characterised by a separatist rhetoric which distinguished women's writing from its supposed opposite: dominant, mainstream men's writing.

The emergence of the new category of Australian women's writing in the literary field seems to parallel the development of the women's movement which, in the 1970s and 80s, took a self-consciously separatist stance in the political field. This stance seems to have determined the tendency by anthology editors to construct a particular kind of 'tradition' for Australian women's writing which was established in their anthology introductions. Introductions tended to monumentalise women's writing as a separate category in a highly polemical way. Hand in glove with this, of course, was the specific project to select and publish short fiction written exclusively by women which served to construct the content of the category.

There is, however, a difficulty in scrutinising Australian women's writing in particular. My discussion here of the way anthologies of Australian women's writing constructed a tradition or revised the canon is not an attempt to suggest that the construction of this new category is unusual, that previously existing categories, like the nationalist short story, were somehow 'authentic.' Rather I want to try to expose the sorts of strategies by which *any* kind of 'literature' is constructed. But the construction of Australian women's writing is especially revealing because it depends on a shift in the terms through which the contemporary canon is constructed.

A basic assumption that now determines the struggle over what counts as contemporary short fiction, as it is presented in anthologies, is that texts are thought to be expressions of social identity, particularly as defined by gender or ethnicity. Thus the struggle over credit in the literary field is not to do with various kinds of texts but with the social identities ascribed to the *writers* of various kinds of texts – by 'Australian women writers,' 'Australian men writers,'



'indigenous writers,' 'ethnic writers,' 'gay and lesbian writers,' 'Generation X writers,' and so on.

It is only because social identity has become a criterion of judgement in the literary field, perhaps as a result of political shifts in the over-determining political field, that revisionist anthologies have retrospectively constructed 'the tradition' in terms of social identity. Social identity, in other words, has become the basis on which some writers are supposed to be over-represented in 'Australian short fiction': men, for example, are supposed to have supplied the content of the category, and thereby dominated the field, by virtue of being men and, as a direct consequence, women are supposed to have been dominated in the field by virtue of being women. Such a view, as John Guillory notes in his study of canon formation, assumes that texts represent individuals and, even more problematically, represent social groups. So the predominance of short fiction by male writers in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century anthologies, for example, becomes the simple result of a discrimination against individual women on the basis of gender. More questionably, all women in this period are identified collectively as though they were discriminated against in the same way and as though they shared common interests and resources in the first place. It is more likely, Guillory argues that

[t]he reason more women authors ... are not represented in older literatures is not primarily that their works were routinely excluded by invidious or prejudicial standards of evaluation, 'excluded' as a consequence of their social identity as women. The historical reason is that, with few exceptions, women were routinely excluded from access to literacy, or were proscribed from composition or publication in the genres considered to be serious.<sup>3</sup>

To apply this view of exclusion to Australian short fiction in the literary field, the nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century predominance of male writers in the field is more a consequence of restrictions on *production* by women than of limitations on *consumption* by women. This is not to say that women were not writing, but that fewer women than men had access to the means of literary production. As a consequence, fewer women than men were producing texts that might be published. But if we construct a view of the canon in terms of gender, Guillory argues, the simply low

numbers of texts produced by women then 'discovers' 'the obvious fact that the older the literature, the less likely it will be that texts by socially defined minorities exist in sufficient numbers to produce a "representative" canon' (Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 15). This is because the only canons which are 'representative' of social identities, that is, thought to reflect the beliefs or values of some social group, were usually produced by personnel drawn from the sorts of elites with the social and material wherewithal, whatever their gender or ethnic background happened to be, to maintain the dominance of their own cultural products in the public domain.<sup>4</sup>

In order to explain the small number of female writers of published Australian short fiction we should look to the social and political conditions in which the literary field operated in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century rather than to a hegemonic conspiracy theory of female subordination. Similarly we should look to social and political shifts in the access of women to literacy and to independent incomes, that is, to the means of literary production as well as to the now-dominant market of female book buyers and readers, to explain the emergence of a contemporary category of Australian women writers in the sub-field. What is interesting about the emergence of this category is that the retrospective gender-based anthology does neither. Instead it constructs a tradition in which 'Australian women writers' were *always there*, waiting to 'represent' all women. It is to this retrospective construction that I now want to turn, before looking at the way anthologies construct a canon of 'contemporary Australian women's writing' on this traditional base.

Revisionist anthologies by Connie Burns and Marygai McNamara and by Dale Spender, both published in 1988, are typical of the 1980s construction of the tradition of short fiction by Australian women. Common to both projects is the tendency to reify 'the tradition' as a positive object which is situated by the anthology introduction in some kind of contest with its supposed opposite, short fiction by Australian men. The central characteristic of this reifying tendency is on the one hand the construction of a coherent corpus of previously marginalised 'women's short fiction,' finally privileged in the content of the anthologies, and on the other the construction in the anthology introductions of 'men's short fiction' which is supposed to be generically uniform, 'mainstream,' and

in some way an active force in the 'eclipsing' of women's writing. I shall attempt here to single out some of the strategies used in the simultaneous construction of the positive object, 'Australian women's short fiction,' and its supposed eclipsing other, 'Australian men's short fiction.'

The cosmological metaphor governing Connie Burns and Marygai McNamara's anthology *Eclipsed* uses exactly the kind of naturalising strategy that is a typical feature of anthologies, elsewhere expressed by geographical, curatorial or organic tropes, as I have tried to show in Chapter Four. In the case of *Eclipsed*,

[t]his anthology brings to light the creative ability of Australian women writers who have been 'eclipsed' in the traditional study of Australian fiction.<sup>5</sup>

The usefulness of the naturalising strategy is that it submerges the function of the anthology as the apparatus that constructs its own positive object beneath the apparent function which is merely to 'bring to light' an object which always existed but was merely somehow previously unavailable. So far as *Eclipsed* is concerned, this object is the coherent body of work by 'Australian women writers.'<sup>6</sup> But Burns and McNamara's cosmological metaphor does double duty here, both naturalising Australian women's writing as a coherent object and naturalising its antithetical relation to its eclipsing other, 'Australian men's writing.'

It is only this other body that obscures Australian women's writing and which the anthology figuratively removes in order to reveal its object to the reader. Burns and McNamara derive considerable leverage for their project from their figuring of the role of the anthology simultaneously as the moment at which the eclipse passes and as the site in which the previously eclipsed object is to be found. Doing both at the same time suppresses the constitutive role of the anthology as the content-forming temporary agreement on whatever counts as the tradition of Australian women's writing that results from two editors working for their own interests and the interests of the publishers of the anthology in the literary field.

The naturalising of the contents of *Eclipsed* that results from the figurative removal of the eclipsing object relies on an *imagined* object, 'Australian men's writing,' and its *imagined* removal. The anthology could be thought to remove this object to the extent that it selects no texts by men but this does not constitute removal, merely

absence, nor does it prove the coherent objectivity of 'Australian men's writing' either in itself or as an obstacle to an Australian women's writing whose coherence remains equally doubtful. 'Australian men's writing' remains for Burns and McNamara only a positively absent object, defined only by its 'overshadowing' of women's writing. But in constructing this object the editors are unable or reluctant to construct any positive content. Women's writing is not overshadowed by any specific men's writing but by the imagined 'beliefs and conventions that have promoted men's writing for the last two hundred years' (Burns and McNamara, eds *Eclipsed*, ix). Such a claim acknowledges the constructed and contested character of cultural production: men's writing dominates the literary field as a result of particular beliefs and conventions that determine the matrix of practices in the field. But this is not an admission of the social basis of production. Rather, it targets the dominance of men's cultural products as social constructions determined by 'beliefs and conventions that promote men's writing' but naturalises women's cultural products as unproblematically positive ones: the beliefs and conventions that have promoted 'men's writing' prevent 'women's writing' – which is writing that just does exist – from shining. In order to naturalise their object Burns and McNamara need to avoid specifying any particular 'men's texts.' 'Men's texts' operate simply as a generalised and coherent category of texts that obstruct 'women's texts': to itemise them would risk undermining both their supposed coherence and their supposed obstructiveness.

The absence of 'Australian men's writing,' however, does not diminish its strategic function in the anthology as the obstacle which has until now denied readers access to Australian women's writing. Without 'Australian men's writing,' it turns out, Australian women's writing,

has always been there; it has just been lost from sight. Australians have not had ready access to this eclipsed wealth of Australian women's fiction. This anthology helps to correct this by bringing a sampling of Australian women's fiction back into the light. (ix)

Burns and McNamara, by admitting to the function of their anthology in bringing the natural object called 'Australian women's fiction' to light, foreground the politicised nature of the anthology as an attempted canon revision. But in so doing they plead guilty, so to

speak, to the lesser charge in order to submerge the problematic basis of their 'sampling' of Australian women's fiction and avoid a few sticky questions. On what basis, for example, is the anthology a *sample*, on what basis is material *selected* from the supposed 'eclipsed wealth of Australian women's fiction,' and what exactly is the implied larger object of which the anthology is supposed to be a sample? Further, when it is 'this anthology' rather than Burns and McNamara that 'helps' to bring 'women's fiction back into the light,' the editors are able to suppress their own agency in determining the anthology contents and at the same time suggest that the light that their anthology 'brings Australian women's fiction back into' is a natural and general object when, in fact, the exposure that they attempt to achieve for their object is as constructed as the object itself.

The eclipse trope allows Burns and McNamara to avoid the appearance of constructing their object because the anthology appears to be not so much a selection as a residue which remains after they have 'brought to light the creative ability of Australian women writers who have been 'eclipsed' in the traditional study of Australian fiction.' But subordinate to and welded onto the naturalising trope is a concern with the institutional status of their object, 'Australian women's fiction.' This appears to be an object not so much because of its status as eclipsed or else brought to light, much as the anthology introduction makes of this, but because its status as content rests on the fact that it has 'been 'eclipsed' in the *traditional study* of Australian fiction.' The construction of 'the tradition' is central to the project of Burns and McNamara.

The emphasis of this anthology is on the tradition of women's writing. It is the women writers of the past who have been previously neglected ... [and] we tended to select those works more relevant to traditional women's concerns as these were often the very works that had been neglected in the past. (xii)

As well, '[t]his anthology has tried to make the tradition of Australian women's fiction more accessible' (xv). The questions, of course, are what kind of access does the anthology provide and to what kind of tradition?

The retrospective construction of a previously inaccessible tradition, while it appears to be paradoxical, becomes conceivable when it is located as an institutional practice, typically in terms of

literary study according to the rules of academic literary practice, as Burns and McNamara suggest in their emphasis on 'the traditional *study* of Australian fiction.' 'Traditional study' makes it possible to think of their paradoxical newly-minted tradition of Australian women's fiction according to the rules of academic literary practice. Like a syllabus list, their anthology projects a sense of the unity of Australian women's fiction as *an object for study* within a pedagogical, literary-critical framework. And this unified object is open to a kind of 'traditional study' or scrutiny of one kind or another (Burns and McNamara do not specify) that typifies general academic textual practices of the kind engaged in by critics and students of texts. The anthology, then, is located in terms of its own traditions but these are only the traditions of *study*, in other words, traditions of the academic institution, not the traditions of 'Australian women,' if such a homogeneous group exists. In constructing this kind of tradition Burns and McNamara

suppress ... the context of a cultural work's production and consumption ... [and] produce ... the illusion that 'our' culture (or the culture of the 'other') is transmitted simply by contact with the works themselves. (Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 43)

That the retrospective construction of a tradition of Australian women's fiction does this is not to say that previous anthologies of fiction necessarily selected a somehow more genuine content that faithfully connected to the context in which that content was originally produced and consumed. All cultural products including short fiction anthologies are always arbitrary constructions that are suited to one social setting or another, always producing, in John Guillory's terms, one illusion or another about 'our' culture or the culture of the 'other.' Guillory's point is that the academic literary syllabus, and likewise the anthology, deracinates the cultural object (Australian women's fiction) in order to stitch together its own homogenous or, as Guillory puts it, speciously unified tradition (34 and 42-43).

In *Eclipsed*, as in all anthologies, Burns and McNamara do exactly this, constructing a homogenous tradition of Australian women's writing for the purposes of literary study, at the same time suppressing their involvement in the process of 'bringing to light' the 'eclipsed wealth of Australian women's fiction.' But how this wealth is defined, like all discovered treasures, depends precisely on who

brings it to light and whose light is doing the illuminating, on how they preserve and display it and on who gets to write about it.

While Burns and McNamara attempt to suppress the role of the anthology in the construction of Australian women's writing, Dale Spender usefully if somewhat ingenuously implicates herself, foregrounding the function of her own 'respectable' anthology, *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing*, as a means of establishing the category Australian women's writing.<sup>7</sup>

Only when all the women writers of Australia are brought together is it possible to identify common patterns and themes, and to speak of a distinctive female literary tradition. Yet surprisingly, this simple exercise of gathering the women together and of *constructing their tradition* has not been undertaken before. (Spender, ed. *Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing*, xiii, emphasis added)

Spender is right in claiming that no anthology before 1988 had attempted to construct a tradition of Australian women's writing, and in claiming that it is by identifying common patterns in some group of texts that she is able to claim the right to distinguish a female tradition, presumably one that is different from a male one.

Her assertion is most useful, however, for what it assumes about this process. Spender pretends, for a start, that the anthology is the site at which '*all the women writers of Australia*' [and shouldn't that be *texts* by all the women writers?] are brought together.' But Spender's content is by no means exhaustive, and the problem of selection is something that she later acknowledges (xxviii-xxix). It is Spender's content, secondly, that determines the sort of 'common patterns and themes' she is able to identify, 'identifying' here taking on the meaning of 'discovering' positive, objective features which 'emerge' (xxviii) from the content. By emphasising the explicit function of the anthology in constructing the tradition of Australian women's writing, however, Spender is able to suppress the constructedness of the object (the anthology contents) from which she appears only to construct a *tradition*. But the kind of content she decides on (and against) fundamentally determines any sort of tradition she might like to make. So it is no surprise 'to find women's views and values at the centre of the literary stage' (xiv) when it is the project of the anthology to situate them in precisely this way.<sup>8</sup>

And Spender's conclusion pretends that the exercise of identifying 'common patterns and themes' (based on her subjectively determined content) is sufficient to define a 'distinctive *female* literary tradition.'

Spender devotes a considerable part of her introduction to supporting this false claim. For example:

[i]f the women do not feature in the *mainstream* literary records, it cannot be because they have not written or because what they have written does not warrant inclusion ... their omission is ... *a reflection of their refusal to conform to the masculine image of the mainstream* (xiii, emphasis added);

women's writing provides another, *often subversive* perspective (xvii, emphasis added);

this collection ... assumes the unfair treatment accorded to the writing of Australian women (xxxix);

and

when they are placed together ... it can be seen that it is the norm and not the exception for women authors to raise their voices against female subordination. (xxxix)

Like Burns and McNamara, Spender constructs an imaginary other, in this case the dominant, conventional, canonical, masculine mainstream, in order to situate her object, Australian women's writing, as an oppositional kind of cultural product and position in the literary field. By making this assertion, Spender constructs not only her object but also the mechanism by which it was supposedly suppressed. Non-selection of Australian women's writing in previous anthologies is the result of the subversiveness of female writers who, as a consequence, become retrospectively *oppositional*, the victims of a conspiracy by dominant male writers.<sup>9</sup>

While Spender relies on the same strategy as Burns and McNamara, sketching her own absent other, 'Australian men's writing,' her account is more sophisticated because she constructs at the same time the oppositional 'solidarity' of her selected content: women's writing is not by definition simply subversive but coherently so because

women have focussed on the price of inhumanity and the shared experience of sisterhood .... That this particular tradition of censure, subversion and solidarity stands outside



the dominant conventions is no doubt a contributing factor in the disqualification of women from the canon.

(xxxii)

Spender fails, however, to specify the dominant conventions of her imagined category, Australian men's writing, and does not show how it ignores 'the price of inhumanity,' a difficult proposition to defend. She has difficulties with the logic of her propositions too. Who or what is it, for example, that women writers have censured or subverted and equally who or what is it that men writers have failed to censure or subvert? And if we suppose for a moment that Spender's men writers have in fact failed to censure or subvert something or other it remains unclear in Spender's account how this failure maintains the dominant conventions (presumably of Australian literature), whatever these conventions might be in particular. Just why 'solidarity' goes with 'censure' and 'subversion' in Spender's account is simply a category mistake: while a collective of agents might claim solidarity for themselves as a group because of their tendency to censure and subvert the prevailing social order so might a collective of complacent agents who are happy to maintain it. And just why solidarity, along with the tendency to censoring and subverting, is a feature of women writers and not of men writers remains unclear. It would appear that men writers possess no such solidarity despite their 'mainstream domination' of the literary field.

Spender presents herself with the rather odd paradox that men's writing is at the same time lacking solidarity *and* a conspiratorial force in the disqualification of women's writing. While this has its problems it allows her to present a coherent positive object that has dominated women's writing, 'Australian men's writing,' without ever having to specify its contents. Australian men's writing is simply what Australian women's writing is not. Australian women's writing, for example, does not romanticise the bush while Australian men's writing presumably does (xviii). The strategic function of defining the object in this way is that Spender is able to weld her object, Australian women's writing, as constituted by her selected personnel, onto the powerfully charged perception of women as until now politically dominated or else disadvantaged by men.<sup>10</sup> As a result Australian men's writing has until now somehow 'disqualified' Australian women's writing.<sup>11</sup>

Spender's account does more, however, than simply position Australian women's writing as the voice concerned with 'the price of inhumanity,' censuring and subverting the dominant conventions in the cultural products of men (if this is what she means in the quotation from page 32 above). It positions this writing – 'a distinctive female *literary* tradition' – as literature. To do so is to claim for Australian women's writing, Spender's constructed object, a highly consecrated (Spender would say canonical) status in the literary field and, by the way, to claim for Spender and her anthologising projects a position as an authoritative consecrating agent while doing so. What makes Spender's selection particularly literary remains unclear, as it does in any anthology which lays claim to the power to consecrating (or deciding what counts as) 'literature': Spender's 'literature' *just is* what is objectified as literature in the anthology introduction and specified in the contents of the anthology, and possesses force so long as the introductory claim and contents are taken up by agents ready to deploy them for their own purposes in the literary field.

Both the process of constructing the object, Australian women's writing, and the process of promoting the anthology as the proper site for this object are deeply embedded in Spender's introduction, as they are in any anthology introduction. What marks Spender's construction of her object so clearly, however, is her attempt to draw the battle lines in the literary field in terms of gender – women's writing opposed to men's – rather than in terms of nation. But the construction of a category like Australian short fiction is equally political, equally dependent on the particular conditions of the field from which the category emerges or, better, struggles, equally the result of the specific projects of subjective agents. But the construction of a category like Australian short fiction seems to be a less obvious process than the construction of Australian women's writing because the category relies on a more or less naturalised and therefore apparently objective conception of nation rather than the contentious conception of gender. What makes Spender's anthology so useful is that it represents one moment in the attempt to naturalise gender as a basic concept with which agents in the literary field negotiate texts.

Spender constructs her content along the lines of gender, as though her anthology incorporates 'all the women writers of

Australia' (xiii) by opposing it to an imaginary, unspecified and absent other, Australian men's writing. The anthology does not, of course, incorporate all the women writers of Australia or even texts by all of them. Spender delays any explanation of the process of selection and organisation until page 28, fifteen pages after her assertion that her anthology brings all the women writers of Australia together. How does she narrow down the field? For a start, no Australian woman writer born after the arbitrarily chosen date of 1939 is selected (xxix). And writers whose texts are already known and easily found are not selected. As a consequence the anthology constructs a particular sort of 'tradition' with writers like Germaine Greer, for example, but not Elizabeth Jolley, Barbara Baynton but not Judith Wright, and without recent writers born after 1939. Spender's 'tradition' presents clear problems. Women writers born after 1939 can be expected to persist in 'focussing on the price of inhumanity' just like those born before 1939, thus making it difficult to specify what is distinctive about the 'distinctive female literary tradition' of women writers born before 1939. There appear to be two 'distinctive female literary traditions,' namely, Spender's tradition as constructed in her anthology and the tradition of those women writers who appear to have been frequently anthologised elsewhere. Not least of all, Spender uncovers the considerable problem she faces in *constructing a tradition* which is, by definition, a way of thinking or acting or body of knowledge accumulated and *handed down over time* rather than constituted in Spender's single moment.

For all the problems involved in her project, it is useful to consider this moment. Spender organises the anthology 'in order to show the ways in which the writing of Australian women [at least the ones born before 1939 and not previously selected in the "mainstream" anthologies of male editors] has grown and developed' (xxviii). To do this she presents the texts 'in chronological sequence based on the date of the author's birth ... [which] allows for the overall pattern to emerge and for the tradition to be constructed' (xxviii-xxix). While at first it appears that the overall pattern emerges from this material, which only means that the pattern emerges in a certain way according to the organisation of the material, Spender's constitutive model soon confuses the process: 'the material,' it turns out, 'should reflect the range of genres and styles which are embodied in the Australian heritage' (xxix). What is sup-

posed, at first, to look like a pattern deductively emerging from a (problematic) list becomes, after all, a previously existing object – ‘the Australian heritage’ – now inductively demonstrated by that list. Spender’s tradition, not surprisingly, is constructed not as it emerges from her selection but as it is dictated by her model. But the interesting feature of the ambivalence, where at first ‘the overall pattern emerges from the material’ and then ‘the material reflects the genres and styles embodied in the Australian heritage,’ lies in the rhetorical purchase Spender gains from the confusion. If in Spender’s account the tradition is embodied by the material *and* the material is embodied by the tradition, whatever embarrassment this might cause to a logically-minded editor, her anthology at least becomes *the* moment where the embodying is done.<sup>12</sup>

The positioning of the anthology itself as a *major* moment in the construction of the object, Australian women’s writing, depends on the claim to the over-determining significance of the literary field that usually follows this claim.<sup>13</sup> Spender devotes considerable space in her introduction to claiming this significance for the literary field in general and her anthology in particular. ‘It is affirming,’ she believes and, given her selective project, not surprising, ‘to find women’s views and values at the centre of the literary stage *shaping the issues and the form of expression*’ (xiv, emphasis added); but then, ‘it is through the accumulated wisdom of the women writers presented here that *the values of the culture can be reflected, and revised, and reaffirmed*’ (xxiii, emphasis added) and, rather more ambitiously, it appears that the women in the collection ‘all recognised the *crucial role that literature could play in shaping a society*’ (xxxiii, emphasis added). Exactly how Spender knows that each writer recognised this crucial role remains a mystery, but what is significant about the claims is that ‘the values’ at the centre of the literary field are supposed to determine ‘the values of the culture,’ and indeed to ‘shape society.’ Whether or not such a claim is taken seriously by agents operating outside the literary field, Spender’s claim that Australian women’s writing determines the ‘values of the culture’ which ‘shape society’ across other fields has the effect of implying at least the centrality of that object in the literary field. And, needless to say, claiming such centrality for her object in general also claims Spender’s centrality in the literary field.

Spender's project in *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing* is a kind of canon revision which attempts to establish the tradition of Australian women's writing and the centrality of this object and its representative texts in the literary field. The oppositional terms used by Spender are, I suggest, borrowed from the earlier project to establish a *contemporary* body of texts by women. I say 'the earlier project' with some caution, however, given that anthologies of contemporary writing by women do not necessarily attempt to construct or revise the canon or even attempt to construct similar kinds of categories or objects like 'women's short fiction.'

For the purposes of discussion I have arranged four anthologies of fiction by Australian women in chronological sequence based on the date of publication. This does not, however, allow for any 'overall pattern to emerge' or for any kind of conspiracy theory to be constructed. If there is any consistent thread in the anthologies it is in the claim to the heterodox character of any collection of the short fiction of Australian women writers. More importantly, by arranging the anthologies in chronological order I want to show how it is difficult to construct a developmental model to explain the strong position of contemporary Australian women short fiction writers in the literary field. If anything, it is possible to make the case that anthologies present an incoherent and non-developmental account of Australian women short fiction writers. Anthologies simply do not make a concerted attempt to canonise any coherent group of Australian female short fiction writers. What they do, however, is to maintain the general category called 'Australian women writers' in the literary field.

Against the grain of any model I might like to propose regarding the progression or development of anthologies of Australian women writers of short fiction, Anna Gibbs and Alison Tilson's 1982 *Frictions*, the earliest anthology I shall discuss, is also the most sophisticated. Gibbs and Tilson begin their introduction usefully by emphasising the problematic character of their project: '[i]f it's difficult to define what makes a "feminist writer," in the course of editing this book we've found it equally difficult to define 'feminist writing'.'<sup>14</sup> And it is exactly the choices they make, they insist, that construct 'feminist writing' as a category. Gibbs and Tilson take great pains to problematise their anthology, first of all because 'all writing

is political – including the kind that wishes to appear neutral [ – and because] “making sense” of something is a social (and therefore political) procedure’ (Gibbs and Tilson, eds *Frictions*, 2), and secondly to emphasise the material conditions of textual production:

‘[t]extual production’ is an effect of both writing *and* reading, and the term also emphasises the material conditions under which writing is circulated. Publishing houses and distribution networks determine not only which writing circulates publicly, but how it does so. The cover of a book tells people which section of the bookshop or library it fits in, whether it’s fiction or non-fiction, belongs to ‘high’ or ‘popular’ culture – tells people, in short, how to read it. For us, to publish with a feminist press is to indicate the kind of intervention we wish to make into various social, political and literary economies. (2)

And my approving quotation here indicates how well the editors appeal to a certain kind of audience.

By problematising their project, the editors foreground their position as agents in the consecration of certain texts, and in so doing circumvent the sorts of criticisms I have already mounted against other editors. *Frictions* constructs a self-consciously problematic and anti-positivist category of heterogeneous works by women which, the editors hope, will generate frictions one with another so that the contents are never fixed or controlled. But this does not release their project from the same sorts of constitutive functions as the other anthologies that I have already considered. To use the terms provided by Gibbs and Tilson, *Frictions*, however self-conscious, is an intervention in the literary field which constructs a body of feminist (or, problematically, ‘feminist’) and ‘anti-traditional’ (3) texts characterised largely by experimentation. But the anthology also includes more conventionally structured narrative pieces by frequently anthologised ‘mainstream’ writers like Elizabeth Jolley, Sheila Anderson and Kate Llewellyn. *Frictions* is not, however, ‘mainstream’: it seeks to ‘over-represent’ texts by women because ‘women are still *under-represented* in most mainstream anthologies’ (2, emphasis added). Like Spender’s mainstream, the mainstream trope used by Gibbs and Tilson projects the contents of the anthology in a relation of opposition, except here it is ‘feminist’ and

experimental opposition to its imaginary other, presumably 'non-feminist' and traditional anthologies.

While the absent mainstream to be opposed is a less obvious strategy in *Frictions* than in *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing*, it works in substantially the same way, providing an imaginary other in order to project what *Frictions* is not. More significantly, Gibbs and Tilson mount an untenable model of anthologies as representations. But what sort of representation is it that *Frictions* provides, and for whom? Let's suppose that by intervening in a small press publication like Sybylla with a small if devoted clientele of readers the editors may succeed in 'over-representing' a certain group of texts by certain women for certain other women. In such a case *Frictions* indeed represents, that is, shapes and presents, the texts of a small group of producers for a slightly larger group of consumers, including those producers. This is typically the case for producers of 'high art' in the cultural field or, as Pierre Bourdieu calls it, in the sub-field of restricted production in the field of cultural production, 'in which producers produce for other producers,' typically according to

a generalised game of 'loser wins', on a systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies: that of business (it excludes the pursuit of profit and does not guarantee any sort of correspondence between investments and monetary gains), that of power (it condemns honours and temporal greatness), and even that of institutionalised authority (the absence of any academic training or consecration may be considered a virtue).<sup>15</sup>

The largely experimental contents, restricted distribution and marketing of *Frictions* as a hard-edged, abrasive book with an upbeat black and white cover signal the anti-popular position of Gibbs and Tilson's intervention at the 'restricted' edge of the literary field. *Frictions*, in other words, is functionally opposed to popular products, including anthologies like Spender's Penguin series which attempt – even if they fail – to reach a wide market of consumers in what Bourdieu calls the field of large-scale production.

Given its position as a restricted product for a small group of consumers, what sort of representativeness can Gibbs and Tilson claim? The anthology can claim representational validity only for its

restricted producers and consumers, but not for 'women' and, as the editors warn in their problematising of 'feminism,' not even for 'feminists.' But the anthology cannot even be called a site for representation. First of all, the restricted scope of the anthology, like the restricted scope of the university literature syllabus and the imaginary canon it constructs, is not a representative place. Further, 'representation' as it is misapplied to anthologies by Gibbs and Tilson pretends that anthologies are representative places, as though the texts selected are 'immediately expressive,' as John Guillory puts it, 'of the author's experience as a representative member of some social group' (Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 10) and as though the institutional practices according to which the anthology is consumed are equally available to all (in this case, all women) along the lines of some kind of democratic model (30 and 37). Clearly this is not the case: *Frictions* counts as an intervention in the literary field and possibly in the political field as well for a specific social group. Of course, this is not to say that the project of the editors in representing a certain list of texts by certain writers for a restricted field of consumers is irrelevant, only that it is restricted. But it is false and misleading to suggest that this makes *Frictions* representative in any wider sense. The interesting function of the claim to representativeness is that it locates *Frictions*, in a move which I have attempted to show is typical of anthologies, as an intervention in the literary field as though the literary field overdetermines social relations across other fields. Such a move by Gibbs and Tilson, a move similarly made by Spender, repeats the ambit claim made by Harry Heseltine in his *Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*, a claim that has the strategic effect of claiming for the anthology a central place in the literary field at least.

While the misconception of representation in *Frictions* serves a useful function in attempting to position the anthology at the centre of the literary field, Elizabeth Riddell's highly problematic conception of representation in her introduction to Suzanne Falkiner's *Room to Move* appears to have stymied the entire project.

There are thirty-two stories in this collection and according to my cherished principles, which are against discrimination and segregation in the literary life, sixteen of them should be by women and sixteen by men. However, ... men have had the best publishing chances in this country



from the time of colonisation up to the second World War, and ... it is still easier for a second rate male writer to get into print than it is for a first rate female writer to do the same.<sup>16</sup>

If it is curious that she discriminates and segregates even though she is opposed to this in principle, Riddell at least foregrounds the fact that *some* kind of principle determines the selection.<sup>17</sup> In this case it appears to be a kind of affirmative action in favour of writers who are women, an attempt to make it easier for 'first rate female writers' to get into print. Riddell quickly adds that 'she would ideally prefer writers to be writers, without dividing them into sexes' but is prepared to discriminate on the basis of sex (Riddell, 'Introduction,' in Falkiner, ed. *Room to Move*, vii). When she does this, Riddell thinks of the short story anthology as a site in which various individuals might be chosen to represent or not to represent a social group (in this case, women). The anthology, that is, pretends to be a kind of representation which misconceives representation as though all women are represented by it.

This is a misconception of representation for two reasons, as I have tried to show above. Anthologies, firstly, are not wide-reaching artefacts in the political field but reasonably specialist ones, produced and consumed in the literary field frequently although not always in a setting dictated by pedagogical instruction. And, secondly, the fiction selected for anthologies is not necessarily immediately expressive – that is, representative – of the experiences of individuals as members of particular social groups. But when Riddell presents 'first rate female writers' in print and 'divides writers into sexes' she transports into the literary field an imaginary role for the anthology. *Room to Move* becomes an imaginary site in which the sorts of struggles over resources and privileges typical in the political field take place. So when a text fails to be selected it is not simply a result of making discriminations between texts – choosing this story but not that story – but a discrimination in the political sense *against the writer*, supposedly against 'first rate female writers.' It is possible to think this because the text is not thought to be an artefact mediated by a range of cultural agents and mediating between them at all but rather, as Guillory puts it, is thought to be *immediately* expressive of the writer's experience as a representative member of some social group (Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 10). As far as Riddell is concerned,

the text is the unmediated consciousness of an individual who represents women.

If Riddell's view of discrimination usefully reveals the over-determined political bias of the anthology, it helps to conceal the other functions typical of anthologies which construct the apparently unproblematic, objective category, in this case 'Australian women's short stories.' Riddell emphasises the view that what gives a text value is 'getting into print' and the 'critical acclaim or popular interest' that goes with this (Riddell, 'Introduction,' in Falkiner, ed. *Room to Move*, ix-x), 'dividing writers into sexes' in order to promote women by giving them 'the best publishing chances' that men have been supposed previously to enjoy. But she suppresses the role of *Room to Move* itself in determining who decides which writers are 'first rate' and 'second rate.' When 'it is still easier for a second rate male writer to get into print than it is for a first rate female writer to do the same,' 'getting into print' becomes a kind of discrimination typical of the political field: male writers 'got into print' because men dominated the political field. But at the same time 'getting into print' is the objective of the anthology itself, which attempts to redress the imbalance by discriminating in favour of female writers who are presumably 'first rate.'

The charge that previous anthologies have promoted 'second rate male writers' at the expense of 'first rate female writers' gives *Room to Move* great leverage in claiming the right to consecrate certain agents in the literary field. Riddell in her introduction and Falkiner in her chosen content are able to demonstrate their 'first rate' writers: Falkiner selects texts by writers who, following the introduction, can only be thought of as, in her opinion, the 'first rate' or at least the 'best thirty two,' whose work 'represent[s] a balanced selection of modern writing by Australian women' and is 'simply the best of the stories submitted' (Falkiner, 'Preface,' in Falkiner, ed. *Room to Move*, xi). At the same time, Riddell is able to suppress the role of the anthology in promoting these writers because the 'first rateness' of some female writers appears to have existed *before* they 'got into print,' that is, when they were denied publication in favour of 'second rate male writers.' In other words, Riddell is able to have her cake and eat it. 'First rate' writers exist whether they get into print or not, previously having 'never attracted the critical acclaim or popular interest they deserve' (Riddell, 'Introduction,' in

Falkiner, ed. *Room to Move*, ix-x). At the same time publications like *Room to Move* appear merely to confirm the list of the new 'first rate' who deserve 'critical acclaim and popular interest' in a revision of the old 'first rate' male writers who become today's 'second rate.'

Riddell's introduction also suppresses the constitutive function of the anthology in determining that there are thirty-two 'first rate female writers' whose work makes up 'Australian women's short stories.' Why a limit of thirty-two is appropriate, who determined this limit and for what reason remains unclear. Riddell's opening claim that 'sixteen of the stories should be by women and sixteen by men,' rather than exposing the problematic status of the anthology, helps to submerge it. By presenting the possibility that the contents could be divided between men and women with sixteen stories apiece and then scotching it, Riddell presents the illusion that female writers are now well served, having the whole cake instead of half. This allows Riddell to construct her positive object – there are Australian women's short stories – and give value to it – a good collection of female writers 'just does' need about thirty-two stories because this sort of affirmative action doubles what they usually get.

What is unusual about *Room to Move* is that the political bias in its construction of Australian women's short stories is both affirmed and denied. The anthology presents itself as an attempt to promote the writing of women on the basis that 'men have had the best publishing chances in this country' because the literary field is over-determined by the sexual discrimination that operates in the economic, political and other fields which 'still makes it easier for a second rate male writer to get into print than for a first rate female writer to do the same.' *Room to Move* in this instance is an intervention in the literary field by political agents operating with a feminist ideology imported from the political field who attempt to designate and consecrate representatives for women in the literary field. At the same time the anthology presents itself as 'simply' a collection of 'the best of the stories submitted.' In this version, where '[n]o effort was made to select stories that represented names, categories or political beliefs' (xi), *Room to Move* is simply a disinterested cultural product operating according to the rules of the now-autonomous literary field.

Gillian Whitlock's emphatically conditional and non-representative *Eight Voices of the Eighties* is, given her choice to select a variety of genres by only eight women writers, a much more careful, self-conscious and problematising project. Whitlock is careful to stress the conditional status of her anthology.

This anthology presents a selection of stories, criticism, reviews, interviews and commentaries from the most recent work of eight Australian women writers: Jessica Anderson, Thea Astley, Beverley Farmer, Helen Garner, Kate Grenville, Barbara Hanrahan, Elizabeth Jolley and Olga Masters. Together these stories and prose writing present an array of different kinds of writing and different perspectives upon women's writing in Australia now.<sup>18</sup>

Like Gibbs and Tilson, Whitlock situates her project in the matrix of institutional practices that produce various cultural commodities ('popular fiction,' 'canonical literature,' 'women's writing,' and so on) and consecrate them for consumption in various ways ('reading for pleasure,' 'intensive reading,' 'oppositional reading,' and so on). Texts, Whitlock explains, are commodities that are produced, marketed, consumed and always subject to the reorientations produced by academic, journalistic and publishing institutions over time (Whitlock, ed. *Eight Voices of the Eighties*, xiv).<sup>19</sup>

Whitlock's particular orientation is quite calculated: the conditional content and arbitrary status of her *Eight Voices* is specifically opposed to Spender's transhistorical construction, in *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing*, of 'a distinctive female literary tradition' of oppositional solidarity in which women's writing uniformly attempts to subvert male-domination, an oppositionally defined positive object I have already attempted to problematise above (xix). So far as Whitlock is concerned,

[i]n describing these eight writers as *a community of women* who are located quite specifically in the terrain of *white, middle class feminism*, we are not negating the transforming power of their desire but *we are bypassing a tendency to subsume women into one sisterly category of 'woman'* despite real differences of race, class and historical condition. (xxi, emphasis added)

This tendency, and Spender is the target here, 'scripts [women's] stories into a continuing and transhistorical Australian female aes-

thetic' (xxi).<sup>20</sup> In contrast, *Eight Voices* merely presents eight voices of the eighties, almost always avoiding the problematic claim typical of anthology introductions that the anthology contents represent some social group or other. This 'bypasses a tendency to subsume women into one sisterly category of "woman"' but does it bypass the tendency of the anthology to construct a positive object? Whitlock does not construct an imaginary Australian men's writing or oppositional 'mainstream' against which her eight writers stand, but her eight writers are constructed as *voices*. The disparate material which she collects and presents in the volume becomes, like every text, a body of work, in this instance characterised as the voices of a *community* of white, middle class women. But to what extent can the eight selected writers be said to speak on behalf of white, middle class feminism and in what sense do the chosen texts by the eight writers possess a voice (or even eight voices)?

The uniformity imposed on Whitlock's eight voices is the product of the institutional practices embedded in the way 'writers' are thought about. Whitlock chooses eight cultural producers who tended in the eighties to write fiction. She then organises her selected texts with fiction in mind. Welded onto this core of fiction texts are other kinds of text – 'criticism, reviews, interviews and commentaries' – which function to broaden the terrain, to suggest the wider concerns of the selected writers and to provide a context or even a biographical background against which the fiction might be read. But the anthology privileges fiction by organising its material around fiction writers who produced other kinds of text rather than around, say, reviewers who also produced fiction. By doing so Whitlock, for all her care in attempting to locate the selected writers 'in the terrain of white, middle class feminism' which aims to avoid the 'tendency to subsume women into one sisterly category,' is unable to maintain the radically contingent status of her material as the product of institutional practices and subjective choices and, instead, slips into a positivism where the texts become fictionally-defined voices expressive of (eight) forms of consciousness. In doing so she suppresses the problematic status of her project as a grouping together of otherwise radically contingent texts. In other words, she suppresses the fact that her texts are only made coherent because readers are offered a position from which to make certain judgments, supposing that the texts present coherent, psychologically

motivated voices. As well, and like all anthologies, *Eight Voices* constructs its material as a canonical embodiment.

It seems both disingenuous and misleading to deny notions of a canon when dealing with these eight writers who have so obviously represented the acceptable and popular face of women's writing in Australia. (xvii)

The anthology, it turns out, does collect together 'representatives' of 'women's writing in Australia.' The eight selected writers present, and by page 17 'represent,' an object which is no longer 'located quite specifically in the terrain of white, middle class feminism.' Instead, it 'subsumes women into one sisterly category of "woman,"' 'representing the acceptable and popular face of women's writing' which turns out to be a certain kind of narrative fiction as practised (as well as reviewed and commented on) by Jessica Anderson, Thea Astley, Beverley Farmer, Helen Garner, Kate Grenville, Barbara Hanrahan, Elizabeth Jolley and Olga Masters. The function of the anthology in unifying and naturalising the various selected texts as 'eight canonical voices,' coherent in themselves and with one another by virtue of being collected, is one practice in the matrix of practices that have constructed and continue to construct the 'canonical,' 'so obvious' and 'acceptable and popular' status of Whitlock's eight writers in the sub-field of Australian short fiction. What is disingenuous and misleading in Whitlock's account is that this function is suppressed.

To say this is not, of course, to suppose that Whitlock or the editors of any other anthologies are agents in some kind of conspiracy but to suggest that the textual practices in which the editors of anthologies engage are always interventions in the wide cultural field, or the more restricted literary field and the sub-fields within it. And every intervention will necessarily construct and consecrate one object or another, including Australian women's fiction, whether an anthologiser intends to do so or not. The object that any anthology constructs is, in other words, a beautiful lie that even the most fastidiously self-conscious anthology editor seems unable ever to uncover completely.

It is to the remarkably successful and 'beautiful lies' of 'The Balmain School' and Brian Kiernan's *The Most Beautiful Lies* that I now wish to turn.

### 'THE BALMAIN SCHOOL'

Kiernan's project in his 1977 anthology, *The Most Beautiful Lies*, was not, of course, to expose his own anthology as a lie but to foreground the status of his material, firstly, as *fiction* in the category of lies and, secondly, as *the best* in that category as determined by the criterion of beauty. By and large, this is the claim made in most anthology introductions. But Kiernan's title reveals a more ambitious project than this: *The Most Beautiful Lies – A Collection of Stories by Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers: Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding* attempts to promote a specific and restricted list of writers as 'a new movement' of emphatically 'major contemporary fiction writers' in the literary field who produced short fiction.<sup>21</sup> Kiernan's introduction functions to incorporate what might be thought to be a group of texts which have little in common and in so doing marks his project as an attempt to position Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding as the personnel who make up a school. Given that Kiernan admits that his selected writers do not share sufficiently common stylistic characteristics to support such an idea, his task is a difficult one (Kiernan, *The Most Beautiful Lies*, ix). To establish the coherence of the fiction which he selects he defines it partly in terms of what it *is* (a broad category of self-consciously fictional writing [x]) and what it is *not* (not mimetic, not concerned with character or social situation, discarding the stylistic characteristics and content of social realism [x]).

Kiernan's definition of his object, 'the Balmain School,' in negative terms is a strategy typical of all anthologies, as I have already attempted to show. Kiernan's strategy is to define his object in the field, and his position and claim to power as the agent who determines it, by means of 'not-statements' – 'like ... , but not ...' – which, according to Anne Freadman, are the first move in establishing any classification.<sup>22</sup> The priority Freadman assigns to the 'not statement' over the 'is statement' is, however, questionable. Kiernan, for example, begins his construction of 'the Balmain School' by defining what it is and then what it is not. The definition of the boundaries circumscribing the object *follow* the assertion of an admittedly broad positive characteristic (a category of self-consciously fictional writing). It might be more useful to suppose that his object is constituted by the *simultaneous* circumscribing of what it is and what it is not, 'the Balmain School' being identified and

separated from other possible schools at the same time. Jacques Derrida does exactly this when he collapses the sort of dialectic that Freadman's not-statement suggests in his concept of *brisure*, breaking and joining at the same time. It is more accurate to say that the not-statement locates a text in a space by establishing boundaries and, more importantly, relations of identity within the boundary and opposition across the boundary, simultaneously locating what it is like and what it is not like.<sup>23</sup>

So much for the construction of Kiernan's object. But what establishes the status of his objectified 'Balmain School' and its practitioners as the '*major* contemporary fiction writers' in 1977 is not explained. Kiernan makes no attempt to locate his selected personnel against their other, that is, against presumably minor contemporary fiction writers, and does not refer to any criteria which he might use to explain how anyone determines the status of writers as major and minor. This silence is, of course, strategic: Kiernan foregrounds some of the possible coherent characteristics of his object, 'the Balmain School,' but remains silent regarding who determines major and minor writers and how they do so. This is because it is by *claiming* the right to consecrate major writers, that is, to decide who is to count as major writers in the literary field, as Kiernan does in his title, and by being taken seriously by others in the field that the major writers are established.

Kiernan's anthology constructs what he calls in his introduction 'a new departure, even a movement' (ix), objectified first of all by his determining characteristics (a broad category of self-consciously fictional writing which is not mimetic, not concerned with character or social situation, and which discards the stylistic characteristics and content of social realism) and secondly by his content. But the status of his anthologised object in the literary field depends, thirdly, on how it is taken up by other agents in the field and, in being taken up, how it is opposed to other, apparently social realist, objects in the literary field. Kiernan's project to construct his selected texts and their writers as a school, 'a new departure, even a movement' is realised in the moment at which the object is identified as such by other agents in the literary field. Kiernan's 1977 object, 'a collection of stories by five major writers,' becomes, for example, Elizabeth Webby's 1981 object, 'the Balmain School.'<sup>24</sup> And so long as further agents in the literary field position themselves in terms of



this school (even as I do here) it can continue to appear to be a coherent object with power in the field, that is, to be an object worth valuing, opposing, studying. In other words, it is because of the successive uses to which the construction is put to identify various positions in the field that its objectivity is maintained in the field.

What is interesting in the construction of 'the Balmain School' as an object in the field is that three of the five writers objectified as the personnel who make up this school have had a hand in maintaining it in their own anthologies. In the rest of this chapter I want to consider how Murray Bail, Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding attempt in their own anthology introductions to maintain 'the Balmain School' as 'the establishment' and even a kind of paradoxical 'avant-garde establishment' in the literary field.

The fact that Bail, Moorhouse and Wilding have been in a position to edit anthologies which they use – consciously or not – to maintain their status as 'cutting edge' and 'major' contemporary fiction writers offers a broad indicator of their established position as writers of short fiction in the literary field. Wilding produced the first 'history' of 'the Balmain School' in his introduction to the 1978 anthology for Wild and Wooley, collaborating with Moorhouse and Kiernan. Moorhouse's anthology followed in 1983 with the backing of Penguin, followed by Bail's 1988 Faber anthology and Wilding's 1994 Oxford anthology. It is not surprising that Wilding's early version of the establishment of the school foregrounds the interestedness of the agents involved, although not the interests of Wilding as one of the partners in Wild and Wooley, resulting in a partially problematised account. But it is in the later versions published by Penguin, Faber and Oxford that the school is most positively objectified.

Like all anthologies, Wilding's 'The *Tabloid Story* Story' in his 1978 *The Tabloid Story Pocket Book* constructs a history in which the anthology contents are opposed to an equally constructed supposedly preceding object. In Wilding's case 'the new fiction' is opposed to the sorts of fiction previously maintained by what he calls 'the overground scene.'<sup>25</sup> The efficiency of Wilding's 'overground scene' lies in the fact that it enables him to suggest the object against which he stands and to characterise his own position as a member of an underground, at once oppositional and avant-garde. But the 'overground scene,' like the 'mainstream' men's writing opposed by

anthologies of writing by women discussed earlier, is an imaginary construction. Wilding spends some time characterising this object in order to contrast

the sort of new writing we [at *Tabloid Story*] wanted to encourage – no more formula bush tales, no more restrictions to the beginning, middle and end story, no more preconceptions about a well rounded tale. (Wilding, 'The *Tabloid Story* Story,' 302)

Like Kiernan, Wilding establishes his object by referring to what it is and is not, 'new writing, but not well-rounded or bush tales.' But unlike Kiernan he foregrounds his own self-interest and the interestedness of the other personnel who were involved as editors in the initial *Tabloid Story* project. Where Kiernan appears to be the judicially disinterested editor who merely presents the 'five major contemporary fiction writers' in *The Most Beautiful Lies*, Wilding, Moorhouse, Carmel Kelly and, not least, Kiernan himself 'wanted to encourage' a 'sort of new writing' in *Tabloid Story*. The first issues, according to Wilding,

used ... stories from the *editors* and from writers whose work we knew, the new fiction that we knew was around .... [W]e shaped the first two issues from the available materials – and shaped them to show the sort of new writing we wanted to encourage. (302, emphasis added)

But even while implicating the editors in the process of selecting their own work for the magazine Wilding constructs the content of the magazine issues and the anthology selections drawn from it for *The Tabloid Story Pocket Book* as already and naturally existing positive objects that the editors merely discovered. In doing this he operates as all anthology editors do, as I have already tried to show, when they suppose that their selection does not construct but merely presents the object, 'lyric poetry,' 'Australian short fiction,' 'Australian women's writing,' 'new writing,' or whatever. In Wilding's case, 'the new fiction that we knew was around' is a highly contingent category that depends on the fact that certain texts were known to the editors, and presumably were not being published elsewhere. This certainly makes it 'available' but in order to be thought of as 'new fiction' it must be positioned in the literary field. While it appears that the *Tabloid Story* editors come across this 'new fiction' it is, in fact, only because they determine it to be op-

posed to 'overground' publishing, presumably because not published, that it can be described as new, that is, opposed to the presumed old. Even then, the *Tabloid Story* editors cannot be said to have come across the 'new fiction' because the 'new fiction' is constructed in its newness, first by not having previously been published, but secondly only *when* it is published by the implicitly 'underground' *Tabloid Story*.

It is precisely in the positioning of *Tabloid Story* as an alternative publication that its contents can be thought of as the 'new fiction,' that is, as opposed to the contents of supposedly 'overground' publications of 'old fiction.' From this position, as Wilding admits, the editors did shape 'the available materials to show the sort of new writing we wanted to encourage.' But it is not simply by being shaped that 'new fiction' is constructed. Rather, it is in the oppositional position taken by the *Tabloid Story* editors and in their determination that unpublished texts, by definition 'not overground,' are suitable content for publication, made 'new' by being published in the alternative 'underground' *Tabloid Story*, that Wilding's object is constructed. What is transparent in Wilding's account is that the conditions which construct his highly determined object, 'new fiction,' are clearly evident, partly because he foregrounds the subjectivity that determined the publication of 'writers whose work we knew' but also despite his assumption that 'the available materials' just are 'the new fiction.'

Like most anthology editors, Wilding sketches a history of Australian short fiction in order to provide a framework which locates his 'new fiction' in an alternative genealogy which opposes an imaginary object, 'established, enshrined, protected ... realistic, up-country, outback, bush stories' (304). Wilding spends considerable time constructing this imaginary other in order to produce a rhetorical weight of material that appears to obstruct the emergence of the genealogical ancestor for his alternative 'new fiction,' experimental-fantastic stories which reflected

an eclecticism, a richness of literary culture: which became reduced to the narrow, utilitarian, insular, aggressively anti-experimental, philistinely parochial 'write Australia' line: something caused not so much by the nationalistic [eighteen-] nineties writers, but by the new nationalist

theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors  
from the 1930s through the 1950s. (304)

Wilding needs to construct an imaginary other here but he also constructs the cultural matrix of establishment theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors which, he asserts, maintained it. He needs to construct this target not just because *Tabloid Story* constructs an object opposed to previous, supposedly 'overground' objects, but because it constitutes an ongoing 'underground' movement by agents opposed to 'overground' theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors.

The rhetorical pressure required to construct this bogey is evident in the complex sentence quoted above. Wilding loads his constructed object by simplifying what it is, an 'eclectic,' 'rich' 'literary culture,' and emphasising what it is not by the use of a surprising number of odd intensifiers – 'the narrow, utilitarian, insular, aggressively anti-experimental, philistinely parochial "write Australia" line' – and the over-heated punctuation – 'a literary culture: reduced to the 'write Australia' line: something caused by theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors.' While the weight of unusual adjectives – 'aggressive anti-experiment,' 'philistinely parochial' – might persuade his readers of the horror of his imaginary other, it is the syntactic density of the sentence that is most convincing. This terrible object is so dangerous that it threatens to escape Wilding's sentence. Wilding's 'rich literary culture' is opposed: by what? After the first colon: by 'the narrow, utilitarian, insular, aggressively anti-experimental, philistinely parochial "write Australia" line.' But there's more: Wilding uses the second colon to overload the syntax: making it appear as though it is impossible to contain the causes behind the 'write Australia' line in a simple way in the sentence. And just in case the reader is not convinced, Wilding's 'write Australia' puns on the 1950s White Australia policy in order to harness the political credit of the late '70s embracing of cultural diversity – 'an eclectic, rich culture' – and to discredit the supposedly monoculturalist character of 'nationalist theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors.'

In constructing 'alternatives to the Lawson tradition' (306) 'The *Tabloid Story* Story' also harnesses the mythical position of *The Bulletin* as the publication which supposedly single-handedly published and thereby consecrated the texts of 'the nationalist school'

(and no other kinds of texts). At this point in 'The *Tabloid Story* Story' Wilding hands over to Kiernan, the editor of issue 15 of *Tabloid Story*, hosted by the *Bulletin*:

The *Bulletin* had been the vehicle for a generation of writers immediately before and after Federation who had wanted to *make it new* in terms of their experience and to *break through the prevailing conventions* – Henry Lawson, Barbara Baynton, Edward Dyson, Steele Rudd .... For myself as acting editor, this was an historically symbolic opportunity to present the new fiction of the [nineteen-] seventies in the magazine that had carried the new fiction of the [eighteen-]nineties. (314, emphasis added)

The positioning of *Tabloid Story*, issue 15, as the symbolic successor to an apparently oppositional school promoted by the *Bulletin* provides Kiernan with considerable leverage, allowing him to piggy-back his claim that *Tabloid Story* presents 'the new' and 'the break through' on the usually accepted but no more substantiated claim that the *Bulletin* did the same. In doing this he relies on the same claim made by Hadgraft and Wilson, in *A Century of Australian Short Stories*, that the '*Bulletin* style' somehow resists conventionality.<sup>26</sup> The strategic point of this claim is that the content of *Tabloid Story* becomes, true to its genealogy, alternative, new, experimental, fantastic.

Wilding and Kiernan's history of *Tabloid Story* foregrounds their position as cultural producers and the magazine and subsequent anthology as cultural products in the literary field in an antagonistic relation to an imaginary 'overground' and 'narrow, utilitarian, insular, aggressively anti-experimental, philistinely parochial 'write Australia' line.' The specific concern to situate *Tabloid Story* as a moment in a struggle in the literary field prevents them from making the typical claim of anthology introductions that the anthology is an intervention in the literary field which over-determines social relations across other fields, a claim which attempts to make the anthology into a moment of major social importance. Frank Moorhouse's 1983 *The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories: The State of the Art* is, in contrast and as his title suggests, a much more ambitious project which seeks exactly to

position the sub-field of Australian short fiction at the centre of the broader social field.

*The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories*, according to its back cover blurb, 'reflects the robust hedonism of contemporary Australian society.'<sup>27</sup> The blurb, presumably the work of a Penguin publicist, borrows from Moorhouse's statement that 'Australia appears to be still a robustly hedonistic society, but perhaps through art ... we will add sensuality to the robust hedonism' (Moorhouse, ed. *The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories*, 3). It would seem that the Penguin publicist sets more store on anthologies as types of evidence which document Australian society than on Moorhouse's hope that anthologies might change it. But 'Australia appears to be still a robustly hedonistic society' only because Moorhouse's highly subjective selection makes it appear so. Just as Zola believed that the fictional evidence in his novels supported his Naturalist social theory, Moorhouse confuses his own textual material for evidence of positively social facts.

Unlike most anthology editors, Moorhouse elevates the importance of what I have earlier called an ambit claim, that is, the claim that anthologies 'reflect' or 'represent' the concerns of society, by making the claim at the beginning of his introduction, 'The State of the Art of Living in Australia':

[n]ot only is this book a look at the art of story-telling in Australia, it also looks at the art of living in Australia. This anthology ... is something of a map of social concerns. (1)

Such an ambit claim has the strategic effect of suggesting that, because the anthology is so significant that it maps wide social concerns, it most likely holds an important place in the literary field at least. Such a place is implied in Moorhouse's ambitious claim that it is 'the burning edge of the art form' (1). What is unusual is that, unlike most anthologies, his claim to produce 'a map of social concerns' makes up the bulk of the introduction: his content is, he believes,

a clue to the flux of our times ... written about as a way of coping with it and as a way of *recording* it (2, emphasis added);<sup>28</sup>

About a third of these stories are *from* experiences that infringe upon conservative conventions, and the other two

thirds I see as coming *from* mainstream experience. This seems to me to *reflect accurately* the way Australians live (2-3, emphasis added);

If you join the lines of association, the outer and inner connections of these stories, you have *a picture* of the Australian sensibility and *an indication* of the state of the art of living in Australia. (5, emphasis added)

While the claims in Moorhouse's introduction may at first glance appear to be a joke, 'The State of the Art of Living in Australia' is a serious attempt to situate the anthology in two ways. The anthology is, firstly, 'a clue,' 'record,' 'picture' or 'indication' of Australian society, where fiction becomes a kind of *evidence* which, secondly, 'comes from' real, objective facts. The introduction, in other words, constructs the selected fiction as evidence as though it is produced 'from' and 'reflects accurately' something called the 'experience' of 'representative' non-conservative and mainstream writers. What is most striking about the positivism in Moorhouse's account is that the subjective, selective and contingent nature of his material might well have served his claim to constructing an avant-garde anthology at the 'burning edge' in the literary field in which the radically contingent nature of his project might have matched the avant-garde status of his radically contingent and subjectively determined content. Instead, it would appear that the anthology relies on the sort of intensive reading advocated by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in *Understanding Fiction*, a kind of reading I attempt to describe in the next chapter. In Moorhouse's version the properly instructed reader is supposed to be able to discern the sorts of 'outer and inner connections of the stories' that Moorhouse can see in order to 'join the lines of association' and, presto, discover 'a picture of the Australian sensibility' drawn immediately *from* experience.

Because Moorhouse seeks to position himself at 'the burning edge' of contemporary fiction in the literary field he does not attempt to construct a literary tradition out of or against which his object, 'the mood of contemporary Australia in short stories,' might be thought to emerge. This is because his account foregrounds the supposed function of fiction as the contemporary *record* of practices in the broad social field. By foregrounding the function of fiction as a kind of objective social record Moorhouse is forced to suppress the other view of his anthology as an intervention, his attempt to stake

a claim in the literary field – to claim, in other words, the right to mediate as an editor between producers and consumers in his particular selection of texts. This leads Moorhouse to suppress the specific function of the anthology in the literary field in order to position it in the wider social field, claiming that it functions as a body of evidence which is central to the wider social field and in doing so he establishes the significance of his project in the literary field at least, whether or not his claim is taken seriously or even heard in other fields. By positioning the anthology as an artefact that is so significant as to be supposedly beyond the literary field, Moorhouse obviates the need to construct a tradition because the anthology is supposed to be not so much the latest in a line of anthologies that construct and maintain 'the art of story-telling in Australia' as 'a map of social concerns.' And as a map of social concerns it relies less on presenting itself as the last word on some kind of literary tradition than on presenting itself as the most up to date, 'burning edge' record of somehow objective social facts.

While Moorhouse emphasises the function of his anthology as a kind of record in the social field not dependent on the construction of a literary tradition, Bail and Wilding, his 'Balmain School' colleagues, clearly locate their anthologies precisely in the literary field and in so doing construct a literary tradition against which their own school becomes a high point in the development of 'Australian short fiction' in the field. Not incidentally, the publishing houses behind Bail's *The Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories* and Wilding's *The Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories* require as much. Both publishing houses are in the business of constructing ready-reference guides and trade on the prestige of their names. In the case of *The Faber Book* or *Oxford Book* and the Bail or Wilding editorship, both publishing houses and writers benefit from the mutual reinforcement of the alliance, the publishers gaining from the status of their established writers in the literary field and the writers gaining from their status as writers-as-editors for prestigious publishing houses. But in producing 'Australian short stories' anthologies Faber and Oxford are both in the business of maintaining their strong positions in the literary field as prestigious institutions that determine what counts in the field. This includes defining 'the tradition' even if only to



determine the contemporary 'best' that evolves from or even opposes it.

In his 1994 *The Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories*, Michael Wilding sets out to construct a tradition out of which his particular selection of contemporary stories can be thought to emerge. His selection begins with Lawson, who 'established the enduring model of a laconic minimalism of language taut with irony and repressed emotion.'<sup>29</sup> But Wilding downplays the usual definition of 'the tradition' in stylistic terms in favour of a definition characterised by social purpose. Lawson, it turns out,

had a specificity and iconographic memorability that justly led to his reputation as the foremost chronicler of the characteristically Australian; but it was always a politically informed, socially critical account of Australia that he presented. Barbara Baynton's stories *continue in the Lawson tradition, the same world of struggle and hardship and impoverishment*; but whereas Lawson's naturalism partook of a programmatic political analysis, Baynton's world opens out into a gothic drama of emotional horror that is profoundly sceptical of the 1890s vision of social cooperation. (Wilding, ed. *Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories*, xi, emphasis added)

Wilding claims the fundamental importance of 'a politically informed, socially critical account of Australia' in order to link his stylistically disparate material: Lawson's 'social criticism' finds its echo in Baynton's 'social scepticism.' But the rhetorical persuasiveness of Wilding's account rests not so much on the way he traces this supposedly central characteristic as on the way he conflates Baynton's 'gothic drama of emotional horror' with Lawson's 'politically informed, socially critical account of Australia.' These different kinds of stories occupy 'the same world of struggle and hardship and impoverishment' and as a consequence Baynton's chronological position means that she '*continues* in the Lawson tradition.'

What suppresses any questions about this claim is Wilding's careful syntactic arrangement of Lawson and Baynton's respective characteristics. Lawson is conditionally characterised as 'the foremost chronicler' *but* his fundamental characteristic is 'social criticism.' Similarly, Baynton's stories are conditionally characterised in terms of 'struggle and hardship and impoverishment,' enough to link her

to 'the same world' as Lawson, *but* her fundamental characteristic is an 'emotional horror that is profoundly sceptical.' Wilding's account combines Lawson and Baynton in a conditional leap-frogging relationship that has the strategic merit of allowing him to discount style in favour of social concern. Like Heseltine before him, Wilding's problem is that he attempts to construct a continuous tradition which includes stylistically disparate material, specifically Hal Porter's stylistic experimentation and linguistic sophistication (12).

Murray Bail's 1988 *The Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories* is an altogether different sort of project, dealing with the construction of a tradition which his selected stories can be thought to oppose. His anthology, like anthologies of Australian women's writing, specifically consecrates contemporary writers, including Carey, Moorhouse and Wilding. In order to do this he makes use of the sorts of strategies found in most anthologies. The contents are arranged chronologically according to the date of birth of his selected writers, although Bail begins with Barnard rather than Lawson, implying a different developing corpus of work than usual. Bail's introduction begins with the construction of the traditional Australian short story which his selection ostensibly opposes. 'Traditional' here refers to fiction which relies on a dry, terse style, after Lawson.

Writers allowed the landscape to do their hard work ... the very mention of the flat horizon or a few dry sticks was enough to provide that air of stoicism or impending tragedy .... Keep it plain, nothing fancy was the prevailing instinct. Marjorie Barnard's 'The Persimmon Tree' of 1943, the first story in the present anthology, offers *an amazing rejection* of this.<sup>30</sup>

In constructing his imaginary other, 'a drought' or a 'dry tangle of conservatism,' (Bail, ed. *Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories*, xv, xvi) in order to oppose it with Barnard's 'amazing rejection,' Bail operates in exactly the same way as other anthology editors, as I have tried to show above. What is different in Bail's account is that his history of 'the traditional' and 'new' is marked by 'stories from the 1950s on[, which] are generally far more accomplished than those pre-war' (xvi). In order to consecrate his contemporary selection Bail sketches a monolithic identity for his imaginary other, 'traditional short stories': they incorporate on the

one hand 'The Bulletin style' 1890s stories of Hadgraft and Wilson and on the other Wilding's 'new nationalist theorists, critics and publishers and magazine editors from the 1930s through the 1950s' (Wilding, 'The Tabloid Story Story,' 304).<sup>31</sup>

In order to suggest the homogeneity of this constructed object Bail uses two strategies. He borrows, firstly, from the mythology of political conservatism: Australian short story writers, like political activists, had to 'push back the dry tangle of conservatism' (Bail, ed. *Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories*, xvi) because the dominant fiction 'matched the political climate: a drought time of conservatism, conformity and censorship, the R. G. Menzies era' (xv, emphasis added). Apart from the difficulty this presents for Bail – where it is the 'stories from the 1950s,' that is, from 'the Menzies era,' that are supposed to be 'far more accomplished than those pre-war' – the status of the literary field diminishes, becoming simply a sub-field of the political field. The reason for reducing it in this way is that it allows Bail to harness the fiction of 'The Balmain School' to the 1970s wagon of political reform in 'the Whitlam era.' The second way in which Bail attempts to insist on the homogeneity of his imaginary other depends on Patrick White's dismissal of 'Australian literature' as the "'dreary dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism'" – justifiably, a much-quoted phrase' (xv). But why exactly is White *justifiably* much quoted? Bail sees White's phrase and its frequent repetition as justified because White's project was exactly the same as Bail's own.

In 'The Prodigal Son' White attempts to position himself as the heir to the literary throne and to do so needs to construct an object that he can oppose. His first step is to do exactly this in order 'to prove that the Australian novel is not necessarily the dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism.'<sup>32</sup> 'The Australian novel' becomes, as a consequence, an object of contention which newcomers like White are free to claim. His second step is to claim that his own fiction does in fact 'create completely fresh forms out of the rocks and sticks of words' (White, 'The Prodigal Son,' in Lawson, ed. *Patrick White*, 271), and as a consequence White is able to claim proprietorial rights over 'the Australian novel' on the basis of his original, fresh alternativity. And because *he* defines the imaginary opposite and defines it specifically in order to overthrow it, 'the new Australian novel' precisely *cannot* be 'the dreary, dun-coloured

offspring of journalistic realism.' The fact that White succeeded explains both why Bail uses the same strategy, piggy-backing his claim to status in the literary field on White's previous and successful claim, but more importantly why he takes White's version of 'traditional Australian literature' to be an unproblematic description rather than a strategic construction. The matter-of-factness of White's 'dreary, dun-coloured realism' is a product of White's own and Bail's subsequent success in using it to claim that 'the new' just is better than 'the old,' a fresh alternative to convention, in the same way that Spender's 'subversive' fiction or Gibbs and Tilson's 'anti-traditional' fiction just is better than the conventional and male 'mainstream.'

Both strategies position Bail's '1970s writers' as the heirs to the throne. Writers of 'The Balmain School' become the equivalent in the literary field to the liberalising personnel who dominate the political field in the early 1970s and become the second wave, after White, who are precisely *not* producing 'dreary, dun-coloured realism.' As Bail puts it, a 'new generation in the 1970s could survey the progress from something like a cleared plateau' (Bail, ed. *Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories*, xvi).

Bail's plateau metaphor, like most of the naturalising metaphors deployed in anthology introductions, attempts to suppress the role of his particular anthology as a means of elevating certain personnel and texts. Bail claims that his selected personnel and texts are simply the ones that are to be found on the plateau. But more than this, the plateau implies that '1970s writers' are somehow naturally elevated above 'pre-1970s writers' and that they occupy a position from which they can review the 'progress' made by their forbears. Bail's generational trope further naturalises his '1970s writers' as rightful heirs but also suggests a rather more complicated plateau than would at first glance appear. Is the plateau simply the contested high ground of the literary field, an unchanging terrain occupied by various agents over time, or is it constructed, sediment on sediment, from the debris of previous contests, the metaphorical pile of all the preceding personnel and texts that have struggled to occupy the literary field? In the first version Bail simply claims the right to occupy a position on the objective plateau. In the second his anthology is rather more implicated in the process of constructing the field. In this second version his anthology is built on the ruins

of the field, unearthing selected archaeological treasures like 'The Persimmon Tree' and displaying them alongside new works on the rubble of all that has been dismissed.

Read in this way, Bail's introduction runs the risk of foregrounding the function of the anthology as a primary institution in the construction of the field and he spends considerable time attempting to avoid this, constructing a history of the emergence of 'The Balmain School' in which he suppresses his own involvement. This is the particular function of his '1970s writers.' Bail, like Kiernan in *The Most Beautiful Lies*, becomes the objectively detached observer rather than the subjectively implicated participant.

A new generation in the 1970s could survey the progress from something like a cleared plateau .... For all the gains there appeared to be a gap between what they saw being published and what they themselves had experienced – and written. Connected, and almost more serious, was the curious, continuing lethargy in many of the stories. They were surrounded by a quite formidable wall of such stories, so it seemed. To penetrate, to at least offer alternatives, energised their writing. Being in the minority encouraged extremes of form. There was the feeling of having to wave to attract attention. Many in this younger generation consciously, deliberately, wrote against the residue of stolid realism. There were cases of rewriting the established classic, the avant-garde strategy of provocative revision. The new writing was helped along by the young writers themselves becoming editors, being invited to edit anthologies and so on, and an increasing critical interest.

(xvi)

While Bail's history foregrounds some of the institutions that helped to construct 'The Balmain School' – 'the young writers becoming editors, being invited to edit anthologies' and becoming the subject of 'increasing critical interest' – his detached third-person description of 'the new' or 'younger generation' enables him to suppress his own position as one of the young writers who became an anthology editor as well as the constitutive function of *The Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories* itself. Both circumstances are, of course, central moments in the process of constructing 'the Balmain School.'<sup>33</sup>

What is most interesting about his narrative, however, is that his 'new generation' of a 'minority' of 'young writers' provides him with the leverage to characterise 'The Balmain School' as extreme, provocative and avant-garde in order to position it against 'dun-coloured realism.' The purpose of this is to allow the avant-garde new generation to 'penetrate' the 'formidable wall of dun-coloured realistic stories' or 'at least offer alternatives.' In other words, Bail positions 'The Balmain School' as the avant-garde in order to overthrow the prevailing realist establishment and claim for himself and the school a central position in the literary field, the position as *the* establishment. In doing this Bail's account of the transformation of the avant-garde into the establishment is both a *description* of this process, as though it has already happened, and an *enacting* of the process itself, occurring as the anthology is taken up and used.

To isolate the strategic practices of anthology editors as I have attempted to do here is not to suggest a conspiracy theory of textual production where some agents in the literary field like anthology editors operate in a consciously self-interested and self-promoting way, although some no doubt do. Rather, it is to suggest that all of the social practices that operate in the field are institutionally located and at the same time contested, that every instance of textual production and reception is an instance of a position in the field, that no text, writer, publisher, editor, critic, reader is ever autonomous, innocent or disinterested in the field. But what is revealing about the contemporary, and temporary, success of anthology editors in establishing Australian women's writing and 'The Balmain School,' as I have tried to show here, is that the strategies which they use to create their various objects are reasonably durable and not markedly different from those typically used by anthology editors since Francis Palgrave's early construction of *The Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*.<sup>34</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Dale Spender, ed. *Heroines: A Contemporary Anthology of Australian Women Writers*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1991, 5-6.
- <sup>2</sup> Frank Moorhouse, ed. *The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories: The State of the Art*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1983.
- <sup>3</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1993, 15-6.
- <sup>4</sup> It is more likely that nineteenth-century women writers saw themselves as expressing the experiences of particular well-resourced social groups rather than the experiences of women in general. The tendency in canon revision to collapse all women writers into the function of representing all women ignores the differences between, say, nineteenth-century middle-class readers of Jane Austen and women figured in Austen's novels as workers in the servant class. The cultural products of labouring women are not generally claimed by canon revisionists who tend to ignore any public domain material which is not formally *published*. This privileging of publication appears to maintain existing forms of institutional power. For a consideration of alternative modes of cultural production by women see, for example, Constance Penley, 'Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture,' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler, eds *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- <sup>5</sup> Connie Burns and Marygai McNamara, eds *Eclipsed: Two Centuries of Australian Women's Fiction*. Sydney: Collins, 1988, ix.
- <sup>6</sup> Compare the curatorial metaphor used by John Barnes in 'Australian Fiction to 1920,' in Geoffrey Dutton, ed. *The Literature of Australia*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1964. For a discussion of Barnes's essay see Chapter Four, 145-47.
- <sup>7</sup> Dale Spender, ed. *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988, xxx.
- <sup>8</sup> Spender seems to enjoy 'discovering' what she has prescribed and experiences the same ingenuous pleasure when she discovers that the contributions to her anthology of contemporary short fiction by women directly reflect the 'suggestion' she made to her chosen contributors. See Dale Spender, *Heroines*, 19.
- <sup>9</sup> John Guillory also notes the tendency by canon revisionists to suppose that 'canonical writers' are intrinsically hegemonic while 'non-canonical writers' are intrinsically subversive. See Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 19-22.
- <sup>10</sup> Spender attempts to do the same thing in her sketch of women writers as typically concerned with race relations (*The Penguin Anthology*, xvii) in order to forge a strategic alliance with other previously marginal agents in the literary field and possibly to make use of the growing political credit of indigenous people in the wider cultural field. Doing so presents its own problems, not least explaining the paternalistic racism of writers like Katherine Susannah Prichard who, we should remember, 'were – as we are – products of the time' (xvii).
- <sup>11</sup> It remains a problem for Spender to account for what amounts to a faction of writers like Barbara Baynton, Katherine Susannah Prichard or Marjorie Barnard whose texts were 'not disqualified' in previous, presumably male-dominated, anthologies.
- <sup>12</sup> I do not mean that Spender is necessarily aware of the usefulness of her position but that it remains useful for her in claiming a central role for herself and her anthologising projects.
- <sup>13</sup> See Chapter Four, 156, for a discussion of Harry Heseltine's similar positioning of his short story anthology.
- <sup>14</sup> Anna Gibbs and Alison Tilson, eds *Frictions: An Anthology of Fiction by Women*. Melbourne: Sybylla, 1982, i.
- <sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. and trans. Randal Johnson. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 39.
- <sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Riddell, 'Introduction,' in Suzanne Falkiner, ed. *Room to Move: The Redress Press Anthology of Australian Women's Short Stories*. Sydney: Unwin, 1985, vii.
- <sup>17</sup> Marion Halligan takes Riddell to task for this odd inconsistency. See Marion Halligan, 'Women's Short Fiction,' *Island*, 27 (Winter, 1986) 62-3.
- <sup>18</sup> Gillian Whitlock, ed. *Eight Voices of the Eighties: Stories, journalism and criticism by Australian women writers*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1989, xii.
- <sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the practices of such 'supply-side' institutions of cultural production see Chapter Three above.
- <sup>20</sup> Spender appears not to have learned her lesson in 1991 in her anthology, *Heroines*. Here '[w]omen [still] have a different version of their own lives, and ... if given the opportunity they will portray their own resources, strengths, and relationship with the opposite sex, in very different terms from those of men.' Dale Spender, *Heroines*, 19.

- 
- <sup>21</sup> Brian Kiernan, ed. *The Most Beautiful Lies – A Collection of Stories by Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers: Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1977, ix.
- <sup>22</sup> See Anne Freedman, 'Anyone For Tennis?' in Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994, 51-2.
- <sup>23</sup> On Derrida's concept of *brisure* see Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995, 26-7.
- <sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Webby, 'Australian Short Fiction from *While the Billy Boils* to *Everlasting Secret Family*.' *Australian Literary Studies*. 10 (2) October 1981, 154.
- <sup>25</sup> Michael Wilding, 'The *Tabloid Story* Story' in Michael Wilding, ed. *The Tabloid Story Pocket Book*. Sydney: Wild and Wooley, 1978, 295.
- <sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the mythologising of the *Bulletin* as the seed bed of nationalist fiction or 'the Lawson tradition' and of the claim that the *Bulletin* promoted somehow non-conventional kinds of text see Chapter Four, 148-51.
- <sup>27</sup> Frank Moorhouse, ed. *The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories: The State of the Art*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1983.
- <sup>28</sup> Moorhouse appears to subscribe to an expression theory of art here but supposes that expression is a simple record of fact, not a construction in its own right. On expression theories of art see Marcia Muelder Eaton, *Basic Issues in Aesthetics*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1988, 23-8.
- <sup>29</sup> Michael Wilding, ed. *The Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1994, x.
- <sup>30</sup> Murray Bail, ed. *The Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories*. London: Faber, 1988, xv, emphasis added.
- <sup>31</sup> See Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson, eds *A Century of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1963, xi.
- <sup>32</sup> Patrick White, 'The Prodigal Son,' in Alan Lawson, ed. *Patrick White: Selected Writings*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1994, 270.
- <sup>33</sup> Bail might well explain the function of critics in consecrating 'The Balmain School' by referring to the critical responses of Wilding and Kiernan, both of whom were involved in the construction of the school in the first place.
- <sup>34</sup> Francis Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1861. See Chapter Four, 141-44.



## 6

### **Studying writers: will the real literary writer please stand up?**

There has been no attempt ... at making the book a representative collection or a collection of masterpieces.

Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren<sup>1</sup>

Anthologies have played a major part in the construction of formations like Australian women's writing and the Balmain School. But there are other related institutional practices that do the same thing. For most of us, our first and often only experience of short fiction takes place in the classroom. Selection of an anthology for a school English syllabus does no harm to sales. Indeed many anthologies are specifically designed for this market.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the short fiction of selected writers is frequently delivered to students by way of anthologies means that the 'primary text' experienced by the student of English is usually mediated by the institutional relations that characterise the school, besides the institutional relations that characterise publishing.

How 'primary texts' are taken up and used in the classroom depends on the literary training and pedagogical practices of the classroom teacher and also on the so-called 'secondary texts' student-readers use to deal with the 'primary text.' To suppose that there is such a thing as a 'primary text,' however, imagines that some texts are closer than others to some kind of origin, perhaps to the consciousness or original genius of the writer, as though the text is the closest possible approximation to an unmediated ideal expression. Needless to say, 'primary texts' are the same as 'secondary texts.' A short story collection or novel, like a critical analysis, functions in a similar way, determining what consumers do with texts. But what consumers do with texts is strongly determined by the school

context in which readers learn to use texts. One of the reasons that Brian Kiernan succeeded, with *The Most Beautiful Lies*, in his claim to consecrating *Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers* in 1977 was that Kiernan operated from an influential academic position at the University of Sydney. Another was that other academics took his claim seriously by putting his anthology on their Australian Writing and Creative Writing courses. David Malouf also operated out of the University of Sydney at that time in a position from which, as I shall attempt to show, he attempted to influence the way in which his own work should be received, acting as a producer of both short fiction and critical commentary that prescribes the sorts of features readers ought to note in the fiction.

In looking at anthologies and study guides in the classroom, at the way they define what sorts of stories are to count as, say, 'Australian short stories,' at what sorts of writers are to count as 'Australian short fiction writers,' and at how they determine how students should read and write about them I want to consider their prescriptive function in two ways: firstly in terms of the prescriptive claims made by anthology editors and study guide writers in determining *what counts* as the appropriate content of 'Australian short fiction'; and secondly in terms of the prescriptive claims made by anthology editors and study guide writers in determining *what students ought to do* with this content.

### **ANTHOLOGIES FOR STUDENTS**

Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Fiction*, the great ancestor of the pedagogical anthology of short fiction, offers a usefully transparent example of the explicit New Critical claim to the authority to legitimate the contents of and canonical attitudes to 'literature.' An appreciation of the peculiar authorising force of *Understanding Fiction* requires an understanding of the academic and publishing context in which it operated. It was, after all, the younger cousin and companion piece to the earlier canonising enterprise, *Understanding Poetry*, the first in a three-pronged foray into academic anthologising, which was already selling well when Brooks and Warren began *Understanding Fiction*.<sup>3</sup> The *Understanding* anthologies sought to authorise the particular content and teaching methodology of American undergraduate courses and had a healthy slice of the college-text market with an average

yearly print run of 15 000 copies for each title.<sup>4</sup> *Understanding Fiction* announces its credentials to the prospective buyer – academics looking for teaching texts – on the front cover, repeated on the title page with the additional information that Cleanth Brooks is associated with LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY and Robert Warren with the UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, just in case. This is followed by the ‘Letter to the Teacher,’ a sales pitch aimed precisely at the market, the academics who decide which texts to put on undergraduate reading lists.

The ‘Letter to the Teacher’ shows how Brooks and Warren thought of ‘literature,’ although they fastidiously avoid the term. They seem to conceive of this in two ways: first, relationally, as the product of the political relation of the teacher or critic to the student; and, secondly, as a positive category in its own right, as determined by the content of the anthology. The first, relational, conception of ‘literature’ receives substantial attention in the ‘Letter’ while the basis of the second, positive, constitution of ‘literature’ as the natural content of the anthology remains submerged.

Brooks and Warren begin their ‘Letter’ in the fashion typical of anthology introductions by dealing with the problem of defining ‘good’ fiction, placing rather more emphasis on the matter of deciding what they mean by ‘good’ than what they mean by fiction.<sup>5</sup> In fact the problem of defining fiction is deferred until Section I, ‘The Intentions of Fiction,’ where ‘an elaborate definition’ is thought to be unnecessary as it ‘would necessarily be complicated and abstract’ (Brooks and Warren, eds *Understanding Fiction*, 1). Brooks and Warren charmingly opt instead to ‘work toward an understanding of our subject through an investigation of particular instances’ (1), forgetting rather conveniently how selective their particular instances are in the first place. Having deferred the problem of ‘fiction,’ which turns out to be just the category that they want it to be as prescribed by their particular instances, Brooks and Warren confidently deal with what they mean by ‘good’ fiction, which turns out to be the kind of fiction that is amenable to the sort of ‘intensive reading’ that Brooks and Warren know how to do. ‘Good’ fiction, in other words, is the stock of material with which critics and teachers can work if they follow the lead provided by the anthology editors, not a difficult task given that Brooks and Warren provide some

easy-to-read interpretation, discussion points, questions and even assignment tasks after each story.

The political position of the editors, who dominate readers and students simply by claiming the power to determine what counts as 'good' fiction, is not articulated in the 'Letter.' Brooks and Warren simply decide on the definition of literary criticism *and* who gets to define it. And the ease with which they are able to authorise 'good' fiction according to the rules of 'intensive reading,' where 'teacher knows best,' indicates the institutional character of their positions as teacher-critics in the definition of literature. That they succeeded in authorising 'good' fiction was a result of the fact that they were able to supply English teachers with the kind of content and critical apparatus that the massive post-war American student population could 'study.' But their text was taken up by English teachers for another reason as well. The dominant position of *Understanding Fiction* in the pedagogical market also depended on the dominant position of Brooks and Warren as New Critics, that is, on credentials that were imported from the academic field.<sup>6</sup> Brooks and Warren, in other words, get to authorise 'good' fiction because of their prestige as critics and because of the dominant position of their anthology in the pedagogical market.

Although Brooks and Warren avoid the term 'literature,' the 'Letter' is a direct staking of their claim as teacher-critics to control the content of and analytical approaches to literature. So what counts as 'good' literature and what are the 'best' methods to deal with it? Institutionally opposed to that competing broadly humanist view in which literary criticism 'merely encourages the student to systematise his views somewhat,' Brooks and Warren advocate 'reading analytically,' in order to 'broaden' and 'refine' the interests of the reader because, 'if the views [of the reader] *remain substantially unchanged*, if the interests which he brings to fiction in the first place are not broadened and refined, the course has scarcely fulfilled its purpose' (viii, emphasis added). Such a view has immense practical implications for the academic seeking to secure his subject matter (literature) and clientele (students) as well as his authority over them because, by Brooks and Warren's definition, all students – simply by virtue of being students – need to be 'substantially changed' by their expert tuition in the mysteries of literature. For Brooks and Warren, then, literature is a relational category: it is a

certain body of texts possessing forms amenable to certain kinds of analysis which the teacher-critic knows or possesses and, specifically, that the student by definition does not or, better, *must* not possess until instructed in the art of 'reading analytically.' Literature, in other words, is the product of the power of the teacher-critic over the student.

*Understanding Fiction* is an interesting expression of this idea for two reasons. On the one hand, the 'Letter to the Teacher' *articulates* the function of the anthology as it should be used in a relation of domination of the student by the critic or teacher and, on the other, itself *practises* that relation both by delivering to the teacher certain texts, interpretations or discussions of these texts (as well as discussion questions for authoritative use in the classroom) and by imposing on the teacher the views of Brooks and Warren as authoritative critics themselves. Knowing literature and knowing how to read intensively or analytically (vii) go together, and one can prove one's mastery of the category and the practice by having critical standards that are different from, for Brooks and Warren implicitly *better* than, one's students. And Brooks and Warren always win the contest because they are always in a position to show that they have standards which are different from those of students. They demonstrate this in a little exercise regarding Kipling's 'The Man Who Would Be King.' This story illustrates the method of 'intensive reading' and the necessary characteristics of what Brooks and Warren consider to be 'good fiction.'

Brooks and Warren's discussion of 'The Man Who Would Be King' reveals the political basis of their method. Literature, or 'good fiction,' possesses secret formal characteristics that are not immediately noticeable, and the critic or teacher's role is to introduce the unsophisticated student reader to the skills of spotting these characteristics. Brooks and Warren begin by unilaterally prescribing the reasons why untutored readers enjoy Kipling's story: they like it because of the romantic setting and violent action. But

[a] little reflection should bring [the reader] to the conclusion that ... he demands a certain modicum of *characterisation*, a certain concern with the *psychological* basis of action, a certain interest in *moral content*. And a little further reflection should lead him to the conclusion that his liking for the story may depend upon the *organic*

*relation existing among these elements* – that his interest did not depend upon the element of violent plot, or the element of romantic setting, *taken in isolation*. (viii, emphasis added)

Brooks and Warren's priestly induction of the student into the mysteries of the literary critic's 'intensive reading' depends here on two assumptions: that 'good fiction' is organic and based on psychological notions of character; and that the 'good reader' is the reader who can find organic relations between things, especially if he is more interested in the organic relations between psychologically grounded entities than 'simple' elements of plot or setting.

The political clout of Brooks and Warren's position depends in large part on the simple domination of the student by the teacher, but also on the methodological emphasis they place on the curious skill of finding an organic relation between obscure elements in the text. The quotation above also reveals a sleight of hand regarding the reader's liking for romantic setting or violent plot, which are affirmed, but not proved, to be isolated elements. Finding some form of organic relation between them is quite possible but presumably inadequate because such elements are *obvious*, and what counts in 'good fiction' are elements that are not obvious, that depend on the critic's or teacher's superior knowledge. Brooks and Warren show their hand on the following page when they assert the value of 'fiction which does not merely emphasise the elements of violent action and romantic setting but which also leads to some understanding of the inner lives of other people' and charge the reader who is content with 'merely external differences from the circumstances of his own experience' with escapism (ix). It seems to be important to have the capacity to find some elements in fiction, and even to have the capacity to confuse reading about characters with understanding the inner lives of people, and then to be able to integrate these elements into some coherent whole, but not to have other capacities, such as liking such 'simple elements' as mere violent action or romantic setting or even being able to integrate such simple elements.

The view of fiction as something which exhibits an organic wholeness (or *can be read to exhibit* such wholeness, a distinction Brooks and Warren do not, of course, make) clearly underlies the selection of the anthology's content. To the extent that they make any

reference to their mechanism of selection, Brooks and Warren suppress their predilection for similar kinds of psychologically motivated fiction, admitting only that 'the editors have, in large part, chosen stories which are popular and widely anthologised ... [rather than] making this book a representative collection or a collection of masterpieces' (xiii). The statement is interesting for the questions it begs. For whom are the selections thought to be popular? Why does 'wide anthologising' justify inclusion and what effects does selecting previously anthologised selections have? In what sense are the selections not representative, not representative of what and not for whom? Which were the selections *not* 'in large part' chosen for being popular and widely anthologised, or representative or masterpieces, and on what basis? And which of the selections are thought to be masterpieces and on what grounds? Clearly, Brooks and Warren submerge the grounds of their selection more than they explain them and generally imply rather than state their predilection for psychologically motivated realism. So far as the Contents pages indicate, however, the editors invariably pick stories of psychological realism from nineteenth-century writers (Balzac, Poe, Hawthorne, Flaubert, de Maupassant, Chekhov, and so on), and generally pick similar material from twentieth-century writers (Joyce in a realist mode, Mansfield, Hemingway, Thurber, and so on) with an occasional alternative (Kafka, Pirandello).

It is only in their discussion of the critical analysis of theme, in the last and defensive pages of the 'Letter,' that Brooks and Warren admit to their dependence on the fiction of psychological motivation as 'their first *article of faith* ... [because] the structure of a piece of fiction, in so far as that piece of fiction is successful, must involve a vital and functional relationship between the idea and the other elements in that structure – plot, style, character, and the like' (xv, emphasis added) or, read prescriptively the other way about, to be successful a piece of fiction *must* involve a vital and functional relationship between the idea and the other elements in that structure – plot, style, character, and the like. By obvious inversion, 'corrupt' fiction (the term is Brooks and Warren's) is 'brutally debased by insensitive style and crude characterisation and arbitrary psychology' (xvi). Clearly, *Understanding Fiction* constructs fiction as a category of writing typified by the presence of characters which can be understood as psychological realities, chooses its positive con-

tent accordingly and preaches a form of analysis in which readers construct a reading of this content as apparently unified and integrated stories by discerning and synthesising into an organic whole often arcane but never immediately obvious elements.<sup>7</sup> But what is important is that the making of the positive content of the anthology, the constituting of the object – ‘fiction’ – is suppressed in Brooks and Warren’s disclaiming statement above about what they have not attempted and, at best, is only traceable in the references to the intensive reading of the psychological motivations of characters in organic texts.

The editorial strategy of suppressing any reference to the practices of constituting the object by the very means of anthologising is a typical characteristic of the academic anthology introduction, as Alan Golding notes in his study of American poetry canonisation. Typically, he notes, the introduction to a poetry anthology – Helen Vendler’s *Harvard Book of Contemporary Poetry* is his target – ‘gives precedence to the canonising power of poets’ and points out that, in Vendler’s case, such a ‘stance serves to downplay the exclusiveness of the view of American poetry that the anthology represents, an exclusiveness constructed not at all by poets with Vendler as innocent bystander and reporter, but by Vendler herself’ (Golding, *From Outlaw to Classic*, 48). The anthology, Golding argues, is a primary institution in the canonising network of magazines and presses, to which should be added that whole range of supply- and demand-side institutions of cultural production I have outlined in Chapter Three, from institutions that generate actual books and authors to those institutions of consecration that venerate them, as well as those institutions that construct the reader and ways of reading. The feigned innocence of the anthology editor, in the case of Vendler, or silence, in the case of Brooks and Warren, regarding their function as agents with canonising power is, of course, functional. To acknowledge the role of the anthology in canon formation would be to diffuse its power: the transparently canonising anthology would negate its function as a monument, admitting instead to a status, at best, as a provisional selection and, at worst, as a mere object of contention.

In contrast to Brooks and Warren’s *Understanding Fiction*, the institutional scope of Alan Mahar and John Powers’s *Prose Writing for Australians: An Anthology of Feature Articles and*



*Short Stories* is decidedly smaller. While they might appear to target the market of 'student writers' they refer to in their Preface, the bulk of their claims are directed to the English or Creative Writing teacher who, after all, decides on the 'set texts' for her course.<sup>8</sup> Mahar's 'Fiction Introduction' is interesting not only for its attempt to appeal to the browsing teacher but for its exhaustiveness.

The intending writer will find examples of the bush yarn; the epistolary story; the surprise ending; the character sketch; the mood story; humour of situation, exaggeration and imagination, including the macabre; the conventionally structured story; the apparently unstructured 'slice-of-life' and the language construct of some contemporary short fiction. Also to be found will be examples to show the effects of different points-of-view; different tense and mood; narration, dialogue, description, image, symbol and allusion.

Notes to the collection will also provide advice from established writers on how to get started, how to structure a story and the importance of re-writing and editing. (Mahar, 'Fiction Introduction,' in Mahar and Powers, eds *Prose Writing for Australians*, 141)

Mahar takes two bites at the cherry here, in order to attract two kinds of buyer: the teacher looking for examples of generic variety and the teacher looking for examples of various stylistic techniques. He appears to put his money on the marketability of a selection of various genres, but also provides an end-note to

indicate the aspects of style and structure that influenced selection ... to emphasise the variety of stylistic and structural features that deserve consideration in the analysis of prose fiction. (312)

This is followed by a list of categories – plot, character, description and setting, point of view, and so on – and the stories which presumably illustrate them.

The way Mahar arranges his introductory pitch explicitly organises the shape of 'short fiction': short fiction in general becomes all of and only those texts which fit into his categories. His categories, in other words, determine what counts as short fiction, and what counts are bush yarns, epistolary stories, surprise endings, character sketches, and so on, as exemplified by his particular selec-

tion. The fact that his selection can also be used to illustrate different points-of-view, different tenses and moods, narration, dialogue, description, image, symbol and allusion is secondary. Stylistic and structural features do not determine but are determined by the content, which in turn is determined by his categories. Strangely enough, while Mahar appears to imply that categories and styles are mutually inclusive, so that bush yarns, for example, might illustrate various ways of plotting or characterising, it seems that categories are mutually exclusive, so that character sketches, for example, cannot be mood stories.

The simultaneous inclusiveness and exclusiveness in Mahar's pitch is a symptom of his attempt to maximise the appeal of the anthology. Both lists are, in fact, spurious. His first list, of nominally generic categories, is defined in terms of content (bush yarns, humorous stories) *and* in terms of style (epistolary, conventionally structured stories) while his second, nominally stylistic, list makes unclear distinctions between point of view, description and narration on the one hand and image and allusion on the other. But the function of the two lists is not a logical one, to provide an apparatus by which the texts might be examined. Rather, it is rhetorical, to suggest the largest possible number of literary terms that might appeal to academically-trained browsing teachers. This attempt to appeal to as many potential buyers as possible can be seen in the way Mahar discusses his specific selection of content.

The selection, at first glance, is not designed to illustrate a variety of genres or stylistic techniques after all but to produce [s]ympathetic material, stories which encourage readers to draw inferences rather than being satisfied with the explicit statements of the text. Thus 'reading between the lines' through increasing alertness to reference, allusion and style is encouraged by the selection. (141)

This 'reading between the lines,' as I have attempted to show above, typifies the kind of reading practice endorsed by Brooks and Warren, illustrated in their content and made available for instruction through their discussion questions for authoritative use in the classroom. At a second glance, however, '[t]he primary intention has been to provide modern, short examples of variety in language, organisation and theme' (142). *Prose Writing for Australians*, it seems, is a heck of a cake, including in its ingredients broad generic cate-

gories and a variety of styles suited to some kind of close reading, with examples of various themes thrown in for good measure.<sup>9</sup>

*Prose Writing for Australians*, however, is more explicitly pedagogical than most anthologies. In the instructional material titled 'Writing Prose Fiction' that follows his selected content, Mahar exhorts the users of the anthology to write in a particular way, based on the 'models ... found in this collection': writers *should*

start writing about what you know and what you have experienced and then distort it. And the distortions are introduced to heighten the drama and *to establish patterns* ... which emphasise similarities and contrasts .... [and] when patterns, similarities and contrasts are produced revelations follow, truths are revealed. (300-01, emphasis added)

What Mahar's prescriptiveness reveals here is not simply what the editor or teacher wants the 'student writer' to do, that is, to pattern her writing, but also what the editor or teacher is doing, that is, selecting particular texts in order to mark out what counts as worthwhile because patterned or, better, readable as patterned (based on images, say, or symbols or allusions, that is, on a particular kind of 'reading between the lines').<sup>10</sup> Having constructed such 'patternability,' Mahar takes it to be proof that, '[l]iterature is highly ordered .... It is a crafted thing ... [by which we can] identify causes, effects and patterns of behaviour' (304). I do not wish so much to question whether this claim is true or not as to foreground the way Mahar submerges his own function as an agent in the construction of this characteristically patterned object he calls 'literature.'

Mahar's tautological method is to construct 'literature' as patterned kinds of texts in his selected content and to privilege this object in his following prescription to read and write patterned kinds of texts. In doing this, he pretends that his construction is a positive object that is described rather than prescribed by his prefatory 'Fiction Introduction,' selected contents and 'Writing Prose Fiction' post-script. It is Mahar's authority as an editor for 'student writers' which enables him to disguise this process. Mahar appeals to teachers by providing them with a familiar pedagogical method – 'reading between the lines' – and a set of texts which repay such a method. The practice of 'reading between the lines' in order to uncover patterns, then, constructs patterned stories which Mahar

and in turn the writing teacher can then exhort students to emulate when in fact it is the prescriptive construction of Mahar's patterns that projects patterned stories onto 'student writers' in the first place. It may be true to say that literature is highly ordered, but one reason it is so ordered is because classroom texts like this one so construct it.

In maintaining his emphasis on 'reading between the lines' Mahar clearly identifies his location as a pedagogue consecrating a restricted kind of textual production in the literary field which produces kinds of patterned texts that repay close reading for imagery, symbolism or allusion. For Mahar, like Brooks and Warren, 'literature,' it seems, is not available to just anybody but depends on the secret knowledge made available by selected critics. 'Character and action may be of interest, but,' Mahar believes, 'the way they are presented is of greater interest because it is the definitive characteristic of the story' (305). In order to reinforce this claim Mahar depends on the concept of 'referentiality.' Good writers, he suggests, are referentially allusive, 'sufficiently aware' of the cultural heritage to produce texts that allow 'perceptive responses,' which seems to mean responses that recognise certain kinds of extra-textual allusions (310). His advice to 'student writers,' accordingly, is to study reference texts: 'reference texts would handsomely repay an hour in a good library becoming familiar with them' (310).

The degree to which Mahar's 'referentiality' depends on 'good library reference texts' emphasises his location in the literary field as an agent seeking to maintain the status of a particular kind of culture which is already established or canonised. Reference texts like *The Oxford Companion* series record a particular kind of 'cultural heritage,' being more likely to refer to *Macbeth*, say, than to *Goldfinger*. More than this, however, Mahar's strategic reliance on 'reference texts' to shore up his prescriptive claim that 'literature' is patterned, particularly in terms of allusive references, locates the practice of prescribing what counts in the literary field alongside if not dependent on the institutional power of the 'good libraries' and textual commentaries or 'secondary texts' of the academic field.

Two anthologies that similarly target the market of English or Creative Writing teachers and their 'student writers' are Garry Disher's 'instructive' *Personal Best* and Helen Daniel's 'fascinating insight into the literary imagination,' *Expressway*, both published in 1989.<sup>11</sup> Both anthologies attempt to foreground the identity of the

writer in the process of constructing texts. Disher attempts this by inviting his contributors 'to nominate the published story they consider the best they have written – or the one for which they have most affection' and letting them 'have their say' in a discussion that precedes their story (Disher, ed. *Personal Best*, 1). Daniel attempts this by inviting writers to produce a short story that responds to Jeffrey Smart's painting, 'Cahill Expressway,' which functions as 'a single starting point, a focus' (Daniel, ed. *Expressway*, ix) that enables the student to compare the 'writerly imaginations' of the various writers and gain 'a fascinating insight into something like a national literary imagination' (x).

Given the frenzy of bicentennial short story anthology publishing in 1988, it is likely that the novelty in the method of selection of the two 1989 anthologies was designed to appeal to a jaded book-buying market. Both emphasise their departure from conventional anthologies in their full titles: *Personal Best: Thirty Australian authors choose their best short stories* and *Expressway: Invitation stories by Australian writers from a painting by Jeffrey Smart*, and both Disher and Daniel suggest in their introductions that their anthologies represent radical departures from conventional anthologies. According to Disher,

[i]n most short story anthologies the stories are chosen by an editor, who is not a fiction writer but a critic, academic or teacher with tendentious aims or particular standards, themes or criteria in mind (Disher, ed. *Personal Best*, 1);

while for Daniel, because

these are all new stories, written [e]specially for this collection, [it is] surely the first time that such an Australian collection by major contemporary writers has appeared.

(Daniel, ed. *Expressway* x)

The result, for Disher, is that, '[s]ignificantly, few writers chose a standard anthology piece' (Disher, ed. *Personal Best*, 1) while, for Daniel, *Expressway* is 'a unique reading experience' (Daniel, ed. *Expressway*, ix and xi).

As I have tried to show in the previous chapter, anthology editors construct their object by reference to its imaginary other. What is interesting about the anthologies of Disher and Daniel is that the object which they both attempt to construct is not a revised history, genre or canon but a new kind of anthology, outside and superseded-

ing some kind of imaginary *anthology tradition* characterised not only by 'standard anthology pieces' but by standard editorial practices.

In foregrounding an imaginary anthology tradition, constructing this object in order to locate his anthology outside it, Disher usefully problematises the institutional practices that underlie the selection and publication of particular texts or kinds of texts by particular writers. He asks, for example,

[w]hy has the editor chosen these writers or works, we want to know, and not others? ... If a canon exists, who chooses it, and can it ever be fixed, given the constant changes in writing, reading and critical tastes? How might another editor – with different tastes, or of a different class, race, gender, age group or historical period – have chosen? ... I decided simply to choose writers I admire.

(Disher, ed. *Personal Best*, 1)

By foregrounding his own subjectivity Disher certainly emphasises the subjective basis of his anthology, but this is nevertheless a strategic move to question the objective status of other anthologies, not his own. Disher's self-confessed subjective editorial selection apparently distinguishes *Personal Best* from 'most short story anthologies.' Because he invited thirty writers, he claims, and avoided selecting thirty stories, *Personal Best* is a radically alternative anthology with 'few standard anthology pieces.'

The 'standard anthology piece' is, however, a difficult thing to find, as I attempted to show in Chapter Four. I argued there that if anthology editors do maintain a 'standard' it is by selecting the same list of writers rather than the same short stories. In this regard, *Personal Best* 'consists mainly of established writers' like most anthologies.<sup>12</sup> Disher's subjectivity also appears to distinguish him from the usual 'editor, who is not a fiction writer but a critic, academic or teacher with tendentious aims or particular standards, themes or criteria in mind' (1). By defining himself in terms of what he is not, not a critic, academic or teacher, Disher's selection *appears* to be somehow above 'tendentious aims or particular standards, themes or criteria' as though his consciousness exists in a cultural vacuum. But of course Disher does, in fact, construct his anthology according to some kind of 'tendentious aim or particular standard, theme or criteria.' How? By selecting writers who have commented

'astutely' on writing, who would choose atypical material and who would convey the variety of Australian short story writing (2). At the same time, however, 'the stories are the writers' own, free of prevailing notions about quality and representativeness' (3). Even so, the 'liberating' of the selection from 'notions about quality and representativeness' should not obscure the fact that the selection remains highly determined by Disher's emphasis, however subjective, on astute commentary and the selection of atypical material in order to ensure some form of variety. And the themes that Disher disavows reappear in his organisation: grouping or pairing 'stories that inform one another or offer varying approaches to a theme or subject' (3).

By creating an imaginary 'anthology tradition' which is supposedly subject to the 'tendentious aims or particular standards, themes or criteria' of 'critics, academics or teachers,' thus locating his selection as an alternative, Disher invites us to suppose that his selection of writers and the subsequent selection of short stories by them occurs in some kind of vacuum, free of culturally determined values, social expectations or political concerns. Daniel, similarly, locates her anthology outside the 'anthology tradition,' this time as 'a unique reading experience ... a collective novel ... [with] the kind of unity and integrity we would normally associate with a work by a single writer' (Daniel, ed. *Expressway*, xi). But where Disher tends consciously to problematise some of the practices that underlie his selection, Daniel reveals much about her own position as an agent in the construction of 'major Australian writers' in an unwitting way. She begins her introduction, for example, by asking the reader to

[i]magine privilege: standing in front of a single painting with a gathering of major Australian writers and becoming privy, one by one, to the way each writerly imagination engages with it. Imagine this is an orderly gathering conducted in silence, in privacy, without consultation, but at the same time an eloquent symposium of eye and word and imagination .... Imagine a fascinating insight into something like a national literary imagination at work. This was my readerly dream, now become literary reality in *Expressway*. (ix)

Daniel constructs her 'literary reality' by 'gathering major Australian writers.' And to make this gathering into a 'national literary imagination' she organises her material in order to establish 'the kind of unity and integrity we would normally associate with a work by a single writer.' What makes this coherence possible is Daniel's 'readerly dream,' practically embodied by constraining her invited writers to respond to Smart's painting. Such a project establishes Daniel as the central agent in the project, choosing the 'single starting point or focus,' in other words, subordinating the 'writerly imaginations' of 'major Australian writers' to her coherent consciousness. In doing this it is Daniel who determines the 'unity and integrity' of the work. Daniel shows some reluctance in this role: 'I object strongly to any reader simply accepting the sequence [of stories] on paper. Indeed I insist that the reader make choices and personally determine the sequence' (xiii). Of course, this insistence stresses the subjective and contingent experience of particular readers dealing with the text in particular ways at particular moments, but it does not diminish the real force of the institutions which determine the way readers currently tend to read books.

One such institution is Daniel's Contents page which instructs the reader to 'consider some stories as companion pieces: there are certain 'chronologies' and themes that suggest links between certain stories, while the independence of other stories is emphasised by the physical demarcation of the writer and story title from the others; and Morris Lurie's 'Art is Dangerous, Not So?' which begins and ends the collection persuades the reader to make comparative readings of the stories, encouraging the kind of 'contrapuntal fiction' that Daniel promotes (xiii). Daniel's insistence that 'the reader make choices and personally determine the sequence' sits uncomfortably with her art gallery metaphor, which takes for granted the conventions which rule public viewing by individuals, at once a social event, 'an orderly *gathering*,' and something that is 'conducted in silence, *in privacy, without consultation*.' The function of Daniel's metaphorical gallery experience is to conceal her curatorial role. Just as the exhibition curator silently structures the experience of the viewer, Daniel constructs the experience of the reader which depends on imagining as Daniel imagines in order to gain a second-hand glimpse of the privilege which she enjoys as the anthology



editor. There is, however, more leverage in her gallery metaphor than this.

Why does Daniel spend so much time persuading the anthology reader to imagine along with her? Her 'imagined privilege' emphasises the final, public experience of curated works in a gallery, or the final, published reading of selected and organised stories in an anthology. By describing the experience of the collected stories of the selected writers as finished, the final 'eloquent symposium' which is somehow also an 'orderly gathering conducted in silence, in privacy, without consultation,' Daniel mythologises the production of literature as a spontaneous outpouring of genius, in this case of twenty-nine geniuses, as though reading stories is equivalent to 'standing in front of a single painting with a gathering of major Australian writers' who are immediately prepared to tell stories (and who presumably do not quarrel over who goes first). By pretending that there are no mediating processes that intervene in the production of the short stories which make up the anthology, Daniel suppresses the negotiations, the consultation, the social and physical conditions which underlie the process of inviting certain writers to produce a story based on Smart's painting.

That specific institutional and material conditions underlie *Expressway* can be seen, however, in the way Daniel refers – incidentally – to problems in the construction of the anthology. For example, 'nine [writers] found the idea appealing but, to my sorrow, either other commitments eventually prevented their participation or the idea simply did not work out for them' (ix). Such a failure appears to exclude the nine invited writers from becoming nine of Daniel's 'major Australian writers' but, more than this, indicates that 'the way each writerly imagination engages' with Smart's painting is subject to some measure of success and failure, depending on unexpressed criteria used by the writers, Daniel or both. The failure of the nine writers, in other words, foregrounds the institutions of judgement which police the 'orderliness' of the gathering. Presumably the stories of the twenty-nine invited writers finally included in the anthology are 'successful.' How Daniel 'drew up an invitation list' (ix) and how certain contributions were accepted and rejected remains unclear. Much clearer, however, are the institutional and material conditions which determined the selection of 'a single starting point, a focus.'

Originally I chose a painting with a crowd of figures in an urban setting which, *for reasons of no relevance here*, I was unable to use. While I thought *Cahill Expressway* had many possibilities, I had some misgivings about choosing it simply because it had already appeared on the cover of Peter Carey's *The Fat Man in History*. I feared this connection might *intrude* for some writers, *trespassing* on their own responses to the painting. (xii, emphasis added)

Of course, the factors that determined Daniel's use of *Cahill Expressway* rather than another painting are precisely to do with the legal conception of cultural or intellectual property that attempts to constrain what agents can and cannot do with texts in the literary field, to do with matters of trespass – Daniel's term – which might be 'of no relevance here' only because her project is precisely to construct 'an orderly gathering' as though it is autonomous, 'conducted in silence, in privacy, without consultation.' But the threatened 'intrusion' of Carey's short story collection on the invited writers' 'responses to the painting' indicates that there is no such autonomy. In its place, despite Daniel's 'orderly gathering,' the anthology becomes one moment in the disorderly overlapping of cultural products which copyright law attempts to police. Smart, Daniel and the invited writers are acknowledged and protected by the copyright apparatus of the book, but not Carey or, for that matter, the engineers who designed the subway entrance to the Cahill Expressway.

Whatever their other merits, the disorderly and contingent construction and valuing of what counts as 'Australian fiction' remains more or less suppressed in the pedagogically-oriented anthologies of Mahar and Powers, Disher and Daniel. Each editor constructs a coherent anthology which appears to represent an objective content which is policed in various ways: in Mahar's case, in terms of particular ways of reading in order to write allusively according to some kind of valued set of references; in Disher's case, in terms of his own subjective consciousness set against 'the tradition;' and, in Daniel's case, in terms of the coherent, immediate and orderly response of various writers who combine, as a result of her common stimulus, to form a single 'national literary imagination.'

## **WILL THE REAL DAVID MALOUF PLEASE STAND UP?**

### **GENERAL REFERENCES AND STUDY GUIDES**

The construction of an object made coherent in terms of ways of reading or in terms of an individual consciousness is also, of course, the particular project of general reference and study guides. I want now to consider how these kinds of texts construct objects in the literary field, looking at one such object, 'the work of David Malouf.'

On the face of it, literary reference guides describe the writers and titles who count in the literary field, producing an introductory overview of the personnel and texts that dominate the field. But it is more accurate to say that their function *appears* to be descriptive. The amount of space devoted to particular writers and titles constructs their significance. More than this, the way that writers, texts, genres, schools and periods are described constructs their apparent objectivity as items that are then able to count in the field. I want to look at the way in which literary reference guides do this, firstly, by foregrounding the highly regionalised constraints on the way guides are *used* and, secondly, by examining some apparently descriptive entries on David Malouf.

Readers are situated in relation to reference guides, where the guide becomes an authority, a text to be consulted or referred to in order to verify the particular characteristics of a writer, text, genre, school or period. Readers stand in the same relation to reference guides as students stand to teachers. The way a reader uses a reference guide, as a result, is heavily determined by the practices of study, in which the student defers (willingly or not) to the authority of the teacher or reference guide editor. The possible uses of guides, as a result, are determined by the 'stock of knowledge' which, on the one hand, student-readers carry into their social practice and, on the other, is also specific to the particular settings in which reference guides are used. The use of a guide is especially determined by regional characteristics to do with the space in which the guide is located and the way space is disposed within the guide. This means that the use of the guide is determined by characteristics operating outside as well as inside the text. This is evident in the location of entries and the relationships between them, the way reference guides are organised as alphabetical lists of cross-indexed writers, texts, genres, schools and periods, but it is also evident in the physical access students have to reference guides. Student-readers usually

refer to a guide to locate a writer, text, genre, school or period that has already been prescribed for study. While this involves locating the writer, text, genre, school or period in terms of the space made available in the guide and on the library shelf, spaces which act as guides to the importance of the writer, text, genre, school or period in the field, it also involves locating the writer, text, genre, school or period with and against other writers, texts, genres, schools or periods by determining which cross-references are to count. But, most importantly, it involves the very identity of the writer, text, genre, school or period as particular kinds. This is because the guide functions as an *instantiation* while appearing to be a summation, *producing* the legitimate writers, texts, genres, schools or periods and what are to count as important features of them while appearing only to describe them.

Two reference guides from the Oxford stable, whose series of 'Histories,' 'Companions,' 'Guides' and 'Books' dominate the literary reference market in Australia, provide useful examples of this process. Let me illustrate how they variously construct 'the works of David Malouf.' Adrian Mitchell's comments on David Malouf in the 1981 *Oxford History of Australian Literature*, at one extreme, and comments in Laurie Clancy's 1992 *Reader's Guide to Australian Fiction*, at the other, indicate just how differently reference guides construct the same kinds of category, in so doing framing the reader's perception of Malouf. Mitchell's short entry on Malouf's fiction is based on the first two novels, *Johnno* and *An Imaginary Life*, and constructs 'the work of Malouf' as 'a fiction [that is] characterised by cool deliberation and meticulous craftsmanship.'<sup>13</sup> Mitchell's version of the work emphasises Malouf as a stylist who is 'overly studied' and 'self-indulgent to a fault' (Mitchell, 'Fiction,' in Kramer, ed. *Oxford History of Australian Literature*, 171). As far as *An Imaginary Life* is concerned, 'while it is a book of considerable intelligence and skill, the studied elegance of its style betrays it, for the precious writing becomes brittle rather than refreshing' (171). Eleven years later, the score card has changed considerably. Clancy's 1992 *Reader's Guide* recognises Malouf as a 'mature writer,' whose seven works (including a short story collection), as opposed to Mitchell's two in 1981, construct a definite 'line' through the works in order to organise a coherent corpus.<sup>14</sup> The Malouf of the 1981 *Oxford History* is still principally a poet (referred to in an entry over

four pages long) rather than a novelist (referred to in less than one page). The 1992 Malouf is constructed as a novelist, partly because the reference genre dictates this – the guide is a guide only to *Australian Fiction* – and partly because since 1981 Malouf has only published full works in prose.

It would seem to be simply the *mass* of seven prose works that exerts pressure on Clancy's writing team to construct a coherent corpus. The entry is characterised by references to Malouf's 'superficially quite different' but actually 'similar' or 'usual' handling of 'imagination' from one novel to another, by references to 'continuities' by which the disparate material of *Child's Play* (which includes *Eustace* and *The Prowler*) and the short stories in *Antipodes* are 'united,' and by an insistence on 'antithetic images' and 'carefully structured sets of binary images' that are 'usual in Malouf' (Clancy, *A Reader's Guide to Australian Fiction*, 283-86, especially 285-86). The tendency here to conflate 'the works of David Malouf' and 'David Malouf' might seem to be a mistake that characterises much literary discussion. But the 'sets of binary images' that are 'usual in Malouf' function to gather greater coherence about the object that the guide appears to describe. When the 'sets of binary images' are 'in Malouf' rather than in his works, the object that appears to have been described – a series of comments on certain works written by and called 'David Malouf' – gains the psychological autonomy that readers tend to ascribe to physically existing individuals, as though readers are somehow 'really' reading Malouf.

Because reference guides provide readers with a sketch of coherent objects, usually organised in terms of the alphabetically listed name of the writer, text, genre, school or period, the need to organise seven novels and collections of shorter fiction may well determine the coherence of the *Reader's Guide* version of 'the works of Malouf.' But why is the coherence that is 'usual in Malouf' to do with 'antithetic images' and 'carefully structured sets of binary images'? To answer this question I'd like to return to Mitchell's version. Mitchell emphasises Malouf's preoccupation with perception. Both novels use a first-person perspective. *Johnno* fails because '[t]he narrative appears to attend to the arranged manner of expression rather than to the perceptions recollected' (Mitchell, 171). *An Imaginary Life* deals with 'the transforming powers of the sympathetic imagination ... of being, finally, what one perceives' (171).

Writing in 1981, Mitchell constructs 'the works of Malouf' in terms of perception rather than the possibilities of reading the novels in terms of 'antithetic images.' He differs noticeably from more recent accounts like Clancy's 1992 *Reader's Guide* and detailed study guides like Philip Neilsen's 1990 *Imagined Lives* and Ivor Indyk's 1993 *David Malouf* that depend, as I shall attempt to show below, on Malouf's own account of his fiction in his 1984 article 'Three Talks.'<sup>15</sup>

Publishers like Oxford University and the University of Queensland Press which operate in the Australian under-graduate literary study guide market help to determine what is meant by 'Australian fiction' and to determine who counts in the literary field. This might suggest that publishers simply select the personnel and texts that count in Australian short fiction, as though the field is the product only of commercial market-driven interests. But publishers like Oxford and UQP are operating, as I have tried to show in Chapter Three, as only one publishing institution in a matrix of institutions in the field of cultural production, in this case in a specifically pedagogically orientated market. This means that they are as much responding to the needs of teaching institutions as determining them. So when UQP and Oxford reference and study guides list 'the works of David Malouf' they respond to the inclusion of 'the works of David Malouf' on syllabuses, helping to maintain an *oeuvre* which has usually got there, as Mark Davis notes, as a result of 'a sustained campaign by an academic ... [to] make [the] writer's career' – the flip side of which is that 'those who fail to attract the right sort of academic attention are likely to be overlooked as "serious" or "literary" writers.'<sup>16</sup> The further step in this process is that when UQP and Oxford list 'David Malouf' they help to make that object 'studyable,' maintaining its usefulness as an item on the syllabus and thereby promoting Malouf's continued inclusion on syllabuses. Malouf's durable status in reference and study guides, in other words, responds to and at the same time helps to maintain his strong showing on 'Australian Literature' undergraduate courses. In a survey of ten university undergraduate course guides which detailed course offerings dealing with Australian writers' texts, nine selected a novel by Malouf at least once (see Table 2). Such a strong representation on undergraduate courses indicates Malouf's established position as an object for

critical attention, but the effect of this representation on publishers is not simple. While Malouf's novels appear in thirteen of fourteen courses offered at the ten universities, no single novel title dominates. This determines the format of study guides on Malouf. Guide publishers, editors and commissioned writers respond to the variety of selected titles for undergraduate study by structuring guides in two ways, in terms of inclusive titles and in terms of themes. This helps to maintain the shelf life of the guide. But by doing this guides in turn help to maintain 'the works of David Malouf' as a whole, providing commentary on every novel title just in case it is selected for study. And it is this inclusiveness which helps to construct the appearance of coherence for 'the works.'

**Table 2**  
Selection of novels by David Malouf for 'Australian Literature' undergraduate courses

University*	Number of novels selected	Number of courses offered
Macquarie†	1	1
Newcastle	1	1
Sydney	1	1
Western Sydney‡	1	1
Wollongong	2	2
Deakin	1	1
La Trobe	0	1
Monash	2	2
Melbourne	3	3
Tasmania	1	1

\* Only handbooks which included text lists are shown

† Malouf was selected for 'Contemporary Australian Literature' but not for 'Twentieth-Century Australian Literature.'

‡ Malouf was selected as one of three writers for 'Australian Authors: Special Study,' along with Patrick White and Judith Wright.

Source: 1997 University undergraduate course guide handbooks.

As at 1990, the UQP Studies in Australian Literature series counted Malouf, Randolph Stow, John Shaw Neilson, Michael Dransfield along with 'Aboriginal Literature,' 'Women's Poetry' and 'New Australian Poetry' as worth studying, while in 1993, the Oxford Australian Writers series counted Malouf, Peter Porter, A. D. Hope, James McAuley. UQP had Joseph Furphy, Judith Wright, George Johnston, Olga Masters, Gwen Harwood, David Ireland, Henry Handel Richardson, Xavier Herbert, Peter Carey, Patrick White, Thea Astley, Thomas Kenneally, Elizabeth Jolley and Christina Stead in the pipeline while Oxford had put their money

on Martin Boyd, Bruce Dawe, Helen Garner, Gwen Harwood, Elizabeth Jolley, Henry Lawson, Les Murray, Kenneth Slessor, Christina Stead, Patrick White and Judith Wright. These study-guide 'A' lists mirror and confirm the loose listing of Australian short fiction writers typically selected in anthologies, selecting a wider range of personnel only because the study-guide lists include writers of poetry and longer fiction. The writers in the Oxford and UQP lists who are infrequently anthologised are Boyd, Furphy, Kenneally and Stow (see Chapter Four, Table 1).

Unlike anthologies, however, the specific emphasis in the study guide, as I shall attempt to show, is not to construct a genre but to construct a psychologically coherent object, for example, 'David Malouf,' as the origin of characteristic features that are discernible in and can be shown to operate consistently across a number of works. To show how study guides do this I want to consider study guide treatment of Malouf's *Johnno* and the way this novel is organised into a framework of 'Malouf's characteristic work.'

Two publications by the University of Queensland Press in 1990 indicate the clear hand of supply-side institutions in the construction and consecration of Malouf. The first, a reissue of *Johnno* along with previously uncollected short stories, poems essays and an interview, attempts to position Malouf as 'one of the finest writers in contemporary literature' and reproduces 'primary material' that 'show[s] the range of his remarkable achievement.'<sup>17</sup> The second, a much more sophisticated rendering of Malouf by Philip Neilsen for the UQP Studies in Australian Literature series, attempts to show how the various novels deal coherently with several over-riding oppositions, between the self and the other, the made and unmade place, the centre and the periphery.

James Tulip's 'Introduction' to *Johnno* attempts to harness to this early novel the prestige established by Malouf's subsequent academic reputation. *Johnno* reveals 'a sophistication to the mind of the writer, an appealing self-consciousness, and a subtle awareness of the boundaries of autobiography and fiction having to be mutually crossed' (Tulip, 'Introduction' to *Johnno*, ix). The pressure brought to bear on Tulip's claim that *Johnno* fits into Malouf's overall concern with boundaries and transformation (a point I shall come to in a moment) is revealed in the syntactical contortion in the verb-dense phrase, 'awareness having to be crossed.' Tulip



positions *Johnno* in Malouf's corpus by foregrounding its concern with oppositions, boundaries and transformations. In so doing he harnesses his introduction to the orthodoxy that elsewhere maintains that oppositions, boundaries and transformations characterise Malouf's work.

The idea that Malouf's fiction deals with tensions between and possible resolution of oppositions is attractive, especially for the kind of literary critic whose job it is to synthesise often disparate material into a coherent whole. This is Philip Neilsen's project in *Imagined Lives: A Study of David Malouf*. Neilsen's account of oppositions in the fiction of Malouf derives, interestingly enough, from Malouf's own critical account written in 1984 of his work, which he claims is situated

in that opposition between suburbs and wilderness; between the settled life and a nomadic life; between a metropolitan centre and edge; between places made and places that are unmakeable or not yet made; between the perceiver ... and all sorts of things which are 'other.'<sup>18</sup>

Ostensibly, Malouf is talking about his poem, 'The Year of the Foxes,' but he may as well have been trying to produce an analytical framework for *An Imaginary Life*. Neilsen refines the perspective thoughtfully provided by Malouf to establish three basic oppositions in Malouf's fiction: wholeness/incompleteness; culture/nature; and change/stasis. This framework allows Neilsen to explain Malouf's fiction, quite convincingly and even usefully, in terms of these oppositions and their resolution.

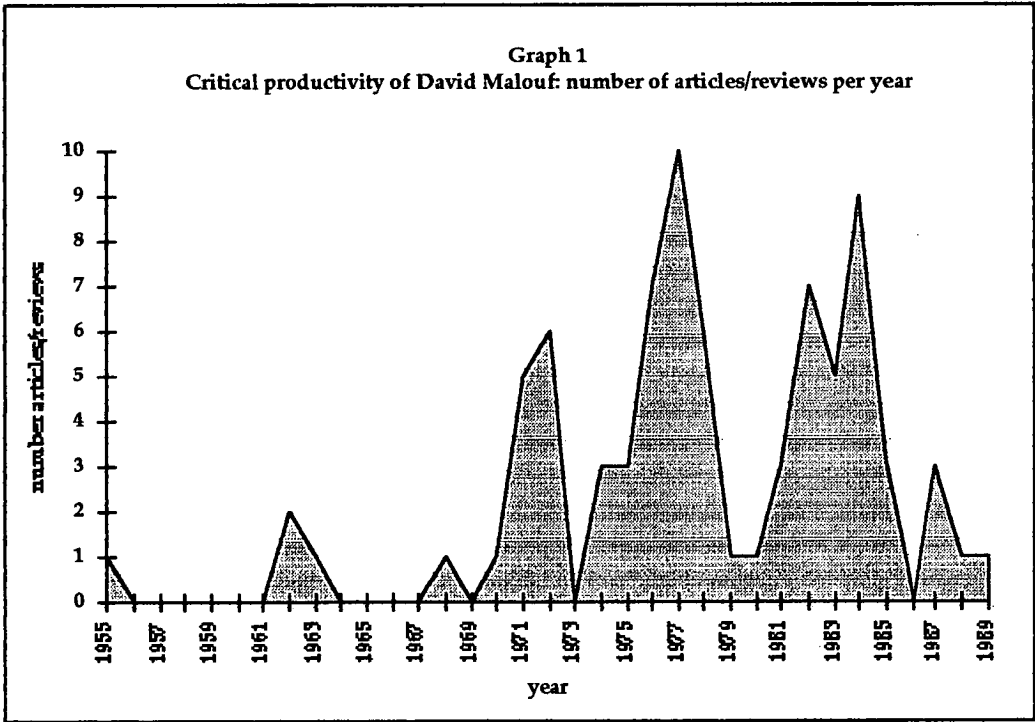
Wherever there is a complete or partial resolution of oppositions, this is achieved through one or more of a limited number of agents: imagination; language; history (or memory); the machine; or the organic. Such resolution involves transformation or change of some kind; and as a result of such change, the protagonist is often enabled to approach closer to nature and to come to terms with death. The agents of change themselves are often inter-related, as well.

This paradigm is already present, in an embryonic form, in *Johnno*. (Neilsen, *Imagined Lives*, 46)

Needless to say, the paradigm is most clearly articulated in Malouf's next novel, *An Imaginary Life*, which might better be called

Neilsen's paradigm and which seems to constrain Neilsen's reading of the earlier novel. What is interesting here, however, is that the paradigm is delivered by Malouf-as-critic in 1984, discussing a poem published in 1970, offering a retrospective paradigm which makes possible an interpretation of his output, linking the 1970 poem to the 1978 *An Imaginary Life*.

How Malouf's paradigm comes to influence future interpreters of his work depends on his timing as a critic. His 1984 binary paradigm retrospectively constructs the 1976 *Johnno*, the 1978 *An Imaginary Life*, and the 1983 *Child's Play* and *Fly Away Peter*, and seems to determine the content of his post-1984 novels. What is interesting is that Malouf's critical productivity peaked twice, between 1976 and 1978 in the period when he shifted from an academic who wrote poetry to a writer who wrote novels, and in 1984 during and after which his output emphasises the mapping of 'places,' 'centres' and 'edges' (see Graph 1).<sup>19</sup>



Source: Philip Neilsen, *Imagined Lives*, 201-06.

Malouf's surge of reviewing and critical activity between 1976 and 1978 produced a public and critical persona that was to maintain his position in the literary field just as he switched from academic-poet to novelist while his critical activity in 1984 enabled him to establish and maintain the rhetorical weight – or 'critical mass' – of the binary

paradigm that was taken up by subsequent literary critics like Neilsen.

Neilsen uses the paradigm to organise Malouf's fiction into a coherent 'body of work' and gains his greatest purchase on this 'body of work' by developing the body trope revealed in the 'embryonic form' of an early work like *Johnno*. Once it is possible to read Malouf's 'body of work' in terms of an underlying series of oppositions which are resolved in one way or another, the early and semi-autobiographical *Johnno* becomes the first step in this reading. But *Johnno* is the 'embryonic form' of the paradigm for good reason. It is, first of all, difficult to read the novel in Neilsen's terms and he struggles to apply the paradigm to it:

the problem of wholeness/incompleteness represented by the duality of the Dante and Johnno characters, and Dante's detachment, is partly resolved through language and imagination .... But the resolution is for the reader rather than for the protagonist .... It is we, not Dante, who realise that Dante has been 'changed.' (46)

Clearly, in so far as texts offer readers experiences which invite some form of closure, so that at the end 'we realise that a character has been changed,' the paradigm can be said to apply to many texts. But the fact that *Johnno* is such a weak demonstration of Neilsen's paradigm is all the more reason to claim the paradigm exists only in 'embryonic form' in the novel. The paradigm, in this case, is still germinating (a guiding trope for Malouf) and therefore understandably difficult to recognise. For Neilsen it becomes recognisable, of course, in *An Imaginary Life* (47). But it is by pushing back the origins of Malouf's apparently coherent paradigm of oppositions and resolutions to the 'embryonic' *Johnno* that Neilsen is able to present Malouf's 'body of work' precisely as an organic body.

Just how much effort is required to maintain the view that *Johnno* represents the embryonic paradigm is neatly exposed in Malouf's recent reintroduction of the novel in his preface to 'a new hardback edition' published 'as part of [the University of Queensland Press's] 50th anniversary.'<sup>20</sup> The preface, published as an article by 'the distinguished novelist and poet' in the *Weekend Australian Review*, reasserts the embryonic motifs: *Johnno* explores the 'notion of parallel lives, alternative fates, ... opposing possibilities' (Malouf, *Weekend Australian Review*, 12). But Malouf

also adds a new credential to the novel by claiming that the novel presents an opposition between the 'absented,' 'elusive,' 'non-existent' Florence where the novel was written – produced retrospectively by the new preface which describes 'the grand, rusticated front of the Pitti Palace, the cypress tops of the Boboli Gardens, and on the ridge above, airily theatrical against the Tuscan sky, the lemon-pale facade of Forte Belvedere' (10) – against which is pitched 'poor, shabby, unromantic Brisbane' (12). The terms claim for *Johnno* a position as a novel which demonstrates Malouf's paradigmatic 'opposition between suburbs and wilderness, metropolitan centre and edge.' And, in an attempt to reinforce the applicability of his paradigmatic opposition of 'places made and places that are unmakeable or not yet made,' *Johnno* becomes a book about the already-made Florence and the not-yet-made Brisbane of Malouf's imagination, 'about reading and interpretation, which is what links it with much else that I have written.' (12) While the claim also links *Johnno* with much else – almost everything else – that has been written by other writers, the point of Malouf's self-construction here is to maintain the paradigm, to police the way *Johnno* can and cannot be read. *Johnno* should not, for example, be read as 'a gay novel,' (10) despite Malouf's timid prefatorial references to 'my Florentine friend.' By policing the novel in this way, constructing *Johnno* in terms of his paradigm, Malouf produces a way of thinking about and reading the Maloufian *oeuvre*, the works of the distinguished novelist and poet, which can then be taken up by other interested agents in the literary field.

So far I have assumed that Neilsen's project is a study of Malouf's 'body of work,' but *Imagined Lives* is more ambitious than this. It is, more problematically, *A Study of David Malouf* and, as this subtitle suggests, he constructs a reading of Malouf's fiction as the traces of a coherent psychological identity and set of experiences. This reading can be seen most clearly in the fascinating slippage that occurs in Neilsen's attempt to read Malouf and Dante as the writers of *Johnno*.

At his best Neilsen produces an elegant reading of Malouf's construction of Dante's construction of *Johnno*'s construction of *Johnno*'s persona in the novel.

We learn that Dante has created a fictional character called *Johnno*, and has presented him to us in such a way

that suits Dante's own purposes .... Similarly, we are reminded that Dante and Johnno are both constructed by Malouf. (9)

Beyond this, Johnno's 'manufacturing of illusions ... to construct an image of himself ... mythologises himself' (10-11). Such a view, tracing the text through several narrative layers, enables a number of ironic readings. But the complexity of Neilsen's view seems to become unmanageable. At times it is 'Malouf (or Dante)' (10) rather than Malouf through Dante who controls the narrative. And the temptation to read the novel autobiographically tends at times to lead Neilsen to confuse Dante with Malouf (8) while at others times differentiating them (7).

Ivor Indyk expresses the same kind of uncertainty about the location of Malouf in his fiction. So far as Indyk is concerned, Malouf *becomes* the narrator, Dante in *Johnno*, Ovid in *An Imaginary Life*, speaking in the first person. For Indyk, '[t]he death of the father presides over the birth of David Malouf's career as a novelist. *Johnno* begins with *the writer* sorting through his father's effects.'<sup>21</sup> Who exactly is Indyk's writer, Malouf or Dante? *Johnno* certainly begins with 'the writer sorting through his father's effects' and it is possible to say that this writer is Dante or Malouf or both. Indyk gains some interesting mileage for *Johnno* from this idea, allowing for multiple ironic readings like Neilsen. But the price is to reduce the novel to an autobiographical account that 'begins David Malouf's career as a novelist.' Indyk emphasises this reading in his opening comments. '*Johnno* is the most deliberately autobiographical of Malouf's fictional works' and '[t]he detail encourages some identification of Malouf with the writer Dante' (Indyk, *David Malouf*, 3). But at the same time it is 'Dante's book' that we are reading (3) and, later, 'Dante [who] tells the two stories [of Johnno and the father] in a way which makes them complement each other. The novel can be seen as an act of restitution by Dante' (8) and it is Dante who switches 'to Johnno as the subject of his novel' (9). Indyk slips from the writer Malouf to the writer Dante in such a way that they become indistinguishable. Although he denies Malouf precedence as the origin of Dante, Indyk maintains a tighter control over the relationship between Malouf and 'Malouf's Ovid' (11). Even here, though, he allows for some compression of the two when the 'closing pages of the novel offer the same kind of

consolation to Malouf as they do to Ovid, for they complete the work that will carry its writer's name into the future' (18). Like Malouf and Dante, the identity of Malouf and Ovid is compressed by the way the novel 'carries its [singular] writer's name into the future.'

Indyk struggles to resolve this reading in terms of Malouf's use of first-person narratives. The first-person perspective, he explains, 'is a fickle instrument – since there is no external point of reference, [so] its effects are always open to conjecture' (36). The main 'danger [is] that readers will go all the way, ... applying it to the author himself, so that everything in the text is sheeted home to him' (36). And this is exactly what Indyk does, sheeting home the problem to a 'Malouf in the text.' But his explication of the texts wants to do the opposite, to establish an apparently 'external point of reference' derived from his reading of the novels – he calls this 'Malouf' as well – that functions to constrain 'conjecture.' Indyk returns to this external point again in his discussion of *Child's Play*, a novel written in the first person from the perspective of the terrorist. Here, 'the lifeless style of the terrorist may well be mistaken for [Malouf's] own, as if, in this work at least, the imagination had dropped suddenly and completely out of his writing' (76). Such a possibility cuts against Indyk's argument, which is that Malouf's work is consistent and coheres around imaginative tableaux, best demonstrated in *An Imaginary Life*. In order to resist the possibility that Malouf's fiction moves in various other directions, or that there is no coherent 'Malouf' who constrains the fiction, Indyk accepts 'the terrorist's style as Malouf's own,' compressing narrator and writer again in order to salvage his overall project. '[T]he inert detail in *Child's Play*,' it turns out, 'does represent an anxious aspect of Malouf's own art, one which lurks in the catalogues of *Johnno* and *Harland's Half Acre*, and at times in the straying focus of *The Great World*' (76, emphasis added). Notice how this 'terrorist style' lurks beneath the otherwise distinctive imagination that, Indyk claims, characterises Malouf. It is the critic's gift to be able to discern such traces, even at the expense of a little confusion between authorial presence and narrative voice.

Neilsen's and Indyk's tendency to confuse Malouf and Dante in their discussion of *Johnno* cuts against the general thrust of their respective discussions. For Neilsen, the coherence of the body of

work relies on the oppositions consistently traceable through Malouf's novels, not Dante's. For Indyk, coherence relies on a psychological reading of Malouf as the origin of consistent experiences that stimulate consistent kinds of material. To support this, the underlying argument in his study is that Malouf's work is characterised by common features: emblematic tableaux that allow for equivalences and oppositions (after Neilsen); a concern for masculine experience; an emphasis on the relation of father and son figures and often homosexual relations; and a concern with Malouf's own sense of exclusion. What is interesting about Indyk's reading is that his characteristics incorporate possibly non-psychological technical features (like the frequent use of tableaux in Malouf's fiction) into a psychological reading of Malouf as a person concerned with masculine experience, the relation of father and son figures, homosexual relations, and his own sense of exclusion. It may well be that Malouf's psychological make-up *does* stimulate the kind of fiction that he writes, but what is important is that Indyk's reading constructs the fiction as though it is all and always the unmediated coherent trace of the experience of Malouf, the coherent psychological individual. The constructing of Malouf as a psychological entity apparently originating but actually traced by his texts is, of course, a favourite past-time of literary critics who have played this sort of game since Malone constructed the poet Shakespeare, newly made evident in his sonnets.<sup>22</sup>

The versions of 'Malouf' that Neilsen and Indyk construct in their studies of 'the man' – Neilsen in *A Study of David Malouf* and Indyk in *David Malouf* – work to project 'the man' as 'the author' who is outside and antecedent to his novels, and at the same time expressed through his novels. This 'Malouf' polices the works, insisting that readers deal with the works as a coherent and developing body of material expressive of some psychologically coherent perspective, and constraining possible readings by prescribing, for example, the centrality of tableaux that produce patterns of equivalence and opposition, a prescription that forces the reader, including Neilsen, to re-read *Johnno* as an 'embryonic form' of the pattern 'best' illustrated by *An Imaginary Life*.<sup>23</sup> But at the same time the priority of Malouf in the works is derived from the works themselves. The 'Malouf' that appears to determine Neilsen's and Indyk's 'works of Malouf' is actually traced from the novels. And the even

greater difficulty is that in tracing this 'Malouf' both Neilsen and Indyk collapse their 'Maloufs' into the first-person perspectives of the novels.

For all that their accounts of Malouf are problematic, the study guides of Neilsen and Indyk constrain what readers do with and how they value the texts. This is, of course, their explicit function. The back cover blurb to Neilsen's guide 'explores in detail the work of this highly respected writer, demonstrating that both his fiction and poetry reveal a distinctive interconnected system of oppositions, themes and images ... [and a] number of concerns [that] are central to David Malouf.' Indyk's blurb 'presents Malouf as both a primitive and a romantic ... [and] explores the hidden logic of Malouf's art, revealing an underlying technique that works through emblem and analogy.' Both blurbs present the guides as descriptions of 'the works of David Malouf,' exploring this object in order to reveal what is otherwise hidden. In both, the student-reader depends on the critic to distinguish the important patterns in the work/the man, Neilsen 'revealing what is distinctive,' Indyk 'exploring what is hidden' in the positive object they actually construct. Like general reference guides and anthologies, their study guides function like all study guides to establish and maintain certain personnel, texts and ways of reading them in the literary field. This is because cultural products and practices are all and always interventions which compete to establish and maintain and demolish and suppress the interests of the various social agents who operate in the wider cultural field.



- <sup>1</sup> Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, eds *Understanding Fiction*. New York: Crofts, 1943, xiii.
- <sup>2</sup> When print runs are as low as 3000 copies, selection for study, especially on the New South Wales HSC or the VCE has a major impact on the fortunes of an anthology. On low print runs in the Australian market see Hans Hoegh Guldberg, *Books – Who Reads Them? A study of borrowing and buying in Australia*. Sydney: Economic Strategies [for the Australia Council], 1990, 204.
- <sup>3</sup> *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction* were supplemented by *Understanding Drama*, ed. Brooks and Robert B. Hamilton, in 1948.
- <sup>4</sup> See Alan Golding, *From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry*. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1995, 104-05. *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction* sold roughly one million copies between 1938 and 1975.
- <sup>5</sup> Brooks and Warren delay their claim that '[t]here has been no attempt at great novelty in selection ... [or] a representative collection of masterpieces,' a delay of seven pages, presumably because the pedagogical sales pitch has made redundant the usual appeal to novelty. See *Understanding Fiction*, xiii.
- <sup>6</sup> Brooks's substantial academic output stretches from *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* in 1939 to *Historical Evidence and the Reading of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* in 1991.
- <sup>7</sup> Brooks and Warren seem, in *Understanding Fiction*, to be especially fond of this sort of tautological argument. See, for example, their 'Appendix: Technical Problems and Principles in the Composition of Fiction' where 'one learns that every good writer develops a method which, in so far as he is a good writer, is specially adapted to the kind of effect which he is trying to give' (569) and presumably every bad writer develops a method which, in so far as he is a bad writer, is specially adapted to the kind of effect which he is trying to give.
- <sup>8</sup> Alan Mahar and John Powers, eds *Prose Writing for Australians: An Anthology of Feature Articles and Short Stories*. Melbourne: Nelson, 1985, x.
- <sup>9</sup> Presumably Mahars and Powers double their market by offering feature articles and short stories in order to appeal to more teachers.
- <sup>10</sup> Compare the 'Appendix: Technical Problems and Principles in the Composition of Fiction' that follows the selected contents in Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Fiction*, 569-600.
- <sup>11</sup> Garry Disher, ed. *Personal Best: Thirty Australian authors choose their best short stories*. Sydney: Collins, 1989, 4, and Helen Daniel, ed. *Expressway: Invitation stories by Australian writers from a painting by Jeffrey Smart*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1989, ix.
- <sup>12</sup> Disher admits this in *Personal Best 2: Stories and Statements by Australian Writers*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1991, xi.
- <sup>13</sup> Adrian Mitchell, 'Fiction,' in Leonie Kramer, ed. *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1981, 171.
- <sup>14</sup> Laurie Clancy, ed. *A Reader's Guide to Australian Fiction*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1992, 287.
- <sup>15</sup> See David Malouf, 'Three Talks: David Malouf, Les Murray and David Rowbotham,' *Australian Literary Studies* 11 (1984), 316-20.
- <sup>16</sup> Mark Davis, *Gangland: Cultural Elites and the New Generationalism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997, 118.
- <sup>17</sup> These claims are made in the back cover blurb of the reissue. See David Malouf, ed. James Tulip. *Johnno*, short stories, poems, essays and interview. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1990.
- <sup>18</sup> David Malouf, 'Three Talks: David Malouf, Les Murray and David Rowbotham,' *Australian Literary Studies*, 11 (1984) 317-18. Neilsen quotes Malouf in order to establish his own model. See Philip Neilsen, *Imagined Lives: A Study of David Malouf*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1990, 45.
- <sup>19</sup> For examples of Malouf's critical activity in the 1980s see, for example, David Malouf, 'First Experiences and First Places,' *Alumni News*, 16 (2, 1984) 4-7; 'From a Great Cultural Centre,' *Age Saturday Extra* (14 July 1984) 14; 'A First Place: the

---

Mapping of a World,' *Southerly*, 45 (1985) 3-10; 'Putting Ourselves on the Map,' *Age Bicentennial Extra* (23 January 1988) 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Introductory blurb to David Malouf, 'The Johnno Blueprint,' the *Weekend Australian Review* (29-30 August 1998) 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ivor Indyk, *David Malouf*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1993, 1, emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> Margreta de Grazia produces an elegant account of Malone's construction of the psychological entity he calls 'Shakespeare' in her study, *Shakespeare Verbatim. The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> It is Foucault, of course, who uncovers the function of 'the author' in policing the text. See Michel Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' in Josué Harari, ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. London: Methuen, 1979. 141-60. Foucault's essay is discussed in detail in Chapter One above.

# 7

## The Usual Suspects

The members of the [Individual Writers' Grants] Committee ... were appointed by the Australia Council for their knowledge of Australian literature and of specific genres of that literature (fiction, non-fiction, children's literature, drama, poetry), for their known integrity and sound judgement, and for their interest in the development and good standing of Australian literature.<sup>1</sup>

[I]t's ... a case of rounding up the "usual suspects."

Mark Davis<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of this thesis I attempted to show how it is that any social actors, and cultural producers in particular, operate with some degree of agency within the historically and institutionally constraining rules of various fields. Much of my discussion has centred on the way that apparently disinterested practices in cultural and specifically literary production are highly institutionally determined and self-interested, to show that every practice is determined by previous contests over who and what counts in the literary field. I have maintained such a focus in order to foreground those less obvious, 'soft,' apparently natural institutional practices or interventions that contest the *publication and reception* of particular products, like 'short fiction' of one kind or another in anthologies or 'the works of David Malouf' in reference and study guides. But in the background there also exist those more obvious 'hard' institutions and the social agents who operate in and with them that determine which writers make it into

print and then into the canon and what sorts of product those writers are likely to believe to be worth writing. These are practices, in the end, that influence what writers write and what gets to be published. I want now to consider some of these practices in order to show how clearly even the apparently autonomous and disinterested practice of 'writing before publication' is determined by such obvious or 'hard' institutions as arts funding organisations, literary juries and writers' festivals in the literary field.

Any attempt to account for the institutions which constrain the cultural agents called 'writers' (meaning here people who write 'fiction,' 'children's literature,' 'poetry,' 'literary non-fiction' or 'writing for performance'<sup>3</sup>) must first dispose of a prevailing myth in the literary field – the myth which suggests that cultural agents are autonomous and disinterested artists, where art somehow stands outside institutional practices.<sup>4</sup> In order to explain how writers in the literary field operate institutionally I want to look underneath this myth at the interested organisations that determine which agents count as literary writers and which texts count as literary texts. My argument is that those organisations which control literary grants or subsidies, literary prizes, even writers' festival programs determine the usual suspects – the kinds of writer and writing that are published and promoted as 'literary' ones.

Categories like 'fiction,' 'children's literature,' 'poetry,' 'literary non-fiction' or 'writing for performance' are determined by a network of institutions including the Australia Council and other state-funded arts organisations, writers' festivals, literary juries, television and radio literary programs, literary journals, academic journals, monographs series, study guides and reference guides, as well as by publishers, editors, bookshops, libraries, and so on. The writer within this network is, as I attempted to show in Chapter Three, ostensibly a primary producer who only appears to supply raw product that is grist for this literary mill. Categories like 'fiction,' 'children's literature,' 'poetry,' 'literary non-fiction' or 'writing for performance,' however, are themselves raw products that determine the writer's production. This relation is neatly exposed in the way that successful applicants for funding from the Australia Council Literature Fund are determined by

the Fund's classification of genres. It can also be seen in the way the Australia Council supports certain kinds of text through its publishing subsidy program.

The Australia Council Literature Fund assesses writers' applications on the basis of 'literary merit' (also called 'literary excellence'), 'cultural significance,' 'originality' and 'the possibility of publication or performance' (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedures - 1994, 3*).<sup>5</sup> These criteria for the assessment of grants determine what writers count as a 'literary' kind of writing in complex ways. It may well be that writers 'write to' the Australia Council categories in order to receive funding, accommodating themselves to the criteria outlined in Australia Council documents. But they also 'write' the categories because Australia Council 'fellowships' and other grants, in conferring prestige on funded writers, confer the status of 'literary work' on the work that such writers subsequently produce. Writers may, in other words, write from a *prescriptive* model of 'literary merit' or 'excellence,' whatever that might mean, in order to make themselves more attractive in the funding market but, once funded, appear to produce the *descriptive* model of what counts as writing of 'literary merit,' as though 'literary merit' existed in the first place. The institutional system of 'literariness' is maintained in this process because agents 'inherit' positions and relationships in the cultural system and, at the same time, elaborate their socio-cultural practices in such a way that they sometimes modify the cultural system.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that the system *precedes* practices, when in fact the process is a kind of circuit in which the system creates practices and is created by them at every moment. The work of the funded 'literary' writer, for example, is determined by (amongst other things) Australia Council assessment criteria and at the same time determines these criteria by producing by definition 'literary' work that can only be thought to count as the 'literary' work the Australia Council funds.

The emphasis on 'originality' in Australia Council assessments also determines the kind of writing writers produce in the literary field. Originality is not, of course, anything new, as I attempted to show in Chapter Two. Originality occupies an important place in the

construction of 'literary work' because it was deployed in the historical struggle against mass-market, formula-driven cultural producers by self-proclaimed artists producing for the restricted market. Originality, in other words, is not a neutral characteristic but a highly charged political one which distinguishes between 'high' and 'low' positions in the literary field.<sup>7</sup> The Literature Fund, in fact, ranks *applicants* (not applications) as 'very high,' 'high,' 'middle' or 'low.' The apparently neutral but highly situated character of Literature Fund assessments is further marked by the attempt to stabilise the indefinable and subjective basis on which the Fund measures 'literary merit,' 'cultural significance' and 'originality.' The Fund attempts to stabilise the judgements made by the committee in several ways. The committee, first of all, includes

members appointed by the Australia Council for their knowledge of Australian literature and of specific genres of that literature (fiction, non-fiction, children's literature, drama, poetry), for their known integrity and sound judgement, and for their interest in the development and good standing of Australian literature. (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedure* – 1994, 1)

The Fund's selections of 'the usual suspects' are, thereby, neatly self-justifying. The committee is drawn from players in the literary field who understand the 'specific genres' recognised by the Fund and who are 'interested' in 'the development and good standing of Australian literature.' Even further, the selection of the assessment committee is determined by members of the Literature Board of the Australia Council who are themselves drawn from the literary field. (Members in 1995 were Marion Halligan, Brian Castro, Kevin Hart, Joan London and Louis Nowra.)

Writers are always situated in relation to the assessments of the Literature Fund, when they are funded as 'original and literary writers of cultural significance,' when they are not funded, and even when they refuse Literature Fund assessment, whether because they perceive themselves to occupy a position above, beneath or outside the category of 'original and literary writers of cultural significance' in the cultural

field. This situating of writers is a two-way street, determined by writers' perceptions of the Australia Council and by Australia Council perceptions of various genres and writers. So far as the Literature Fund is concerned,

[t]he genres of romantic and crime fiction are not seen as high priorities by the Literature Fund [and if] a writer has achieved publication of books in [romantic and crime fiction] only ... they are not eligible to submit an application form for an Individual Writers' Grant.<sup>8</sup>

The Literature Fund takes great pains to establish the boundaries to the literary field, particularly by defining what it is not.

The main focus of the Literature Fund is the creation of literary works. It does not assist the following categories of works: books aimed primarily at the education market (primary, secondary or tertiary); reprints or new editions; books which are primarily works of interviews; local or oral histories; military studies; instruction manuals; how-to books; university theses; bibliographies; dictionaries and encyclopaedia; guide books; catalogues; personal growth, lifestyle and hobby books; works of physical or natural sciences; theology; psychology; cooking; medicine; and law. The Fund does not assist the creation of film and television scripts.<sup>9</sup>

Besides restricting eligible genres, further restrictions are imposed on the personnel who might claim to be 'original and literary writers of cultural significance' as maintained by Literature Fund eligibility standards. In order to apply for 'Grants for Emerging Writers,' the lowest rank of applicants, writers are required to have the following minimum publications:

- six short stories or six substantial extracts of full-length fiction or literary non-fiction in literary journals and anthologies, or general national magazines and newspapers;
- twenty poems of reasonable length in literary publications, or at least twenty commissioned/professional engagements by performance poets;

- ten substantial articles ... in general national magazines or newspapers;
- one full-length script workshopped by a professional company or organisation;
- one full-length broadcast on radio;
- a combination of the above. (*Australia Council Grants Handbook* – 1997, 72)

These restrictions have tightened up since 1995 when eligibility depended on twelve poems, six substantial articles or one full-length script workshopped or performed by a professional or amateur company (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Conditions for Application* – 1995, 6). While this tightening is a response to sharp cuts in Council funding, 'to encompass budgetary and administrative restraints experienced by the Literature Fund' as far back as 1993 (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedures* – 1994, 1), its effect is to restrict further the already restricted character of production in the literary field within the wider cultural field.

Having restricted the process in this way, applications are assessed by at least two members of the Literature Fund Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee who then determine whether an application is 'worthy of a grant or not.' The application is 'then placed on the so-called preliminary "Yes" or "No" List of applications' (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Report* – 1995, 3). In culling the list the procedure of the Committee is to review each judgement. The 'No' list is read aloud to the whole Committee and

further assessment of such applications then took place and, as a result, some applications were placed on the 'Yes' list .... The same procedure was followed for the 'Yes' list in each program and, following rereading of applications, a final list of those recommended to receive grants was established within budget parameters. (3)

What is revealing here is that, while the procedure appears to offer some kind of less partial if not impartial judgement, the assessment is not disinterested, because the Committee members are *pre-selected*, by



agents whose interest is to maintain 'literariness,' 'for their knowledge of Australian literature,' 'for their known integrity and sound judgement, and for their *interest in the development and good standing of Australian literature.*' Further, it cannot be autonomous because the budget is determined, in the end, by agents outside the literary field.

Besides being determined by budget constraints imposed by agents in the political field, the actions of the Australia Council Literature Fund are also determined by the commercial practices that control the economic field. The Literature Fund responds to market pressures by supporting kinds of text from which publishers typically make weak returns, but in so doing also determines the market by constructing two kinds of publication, the non-subsidised commercial one and the literary one. In neither case is the Australia Council autonomous. Literature Fund subsidies support publication of certain kinds of text and publication can then, safely enough, be used to measure the effectiveness of its Individual Writers' Grants program.

Publishers

are eligible to apply for publishing subsidies ... in the following genres: first and second works of fiction; first and second works of literary non-fiction (defined by the Fund as autobiography, biography, essays, histories, literary criticism or other expository or analytical prose); poetry (except selected and collected titles); drama scripts; and anthologies of Australian literature.

Publishers can apply to the Literature Fund for assistance to publish up to ten eligible titles in their literary publishing program. Up to \$3 000 per title is available to assist with production costs for first and second works of fiction or literary non-fiction, and up to \$1 500 to assist with production costs for single author drama titles and single author poetry titles. Publishers may also apply for assistance towards payment of up to \$3 000 for living Australian writers' fees for anthologies of Australian creative writing. (*Australia Council Grants Handbook* – 1997, 75-76)

There is, clearly, an economy that structures publication subsidies. Subsidies for the publication of fiction or literary non-fiction are restricted to first or second works, while poetry, drama and anthologies enjoy less restricted access to subsidies. By restricting fiction and non-fiction subsidies to first or second works, the Australia Council provides some incentive for publishers to publish new writers, responding to the typically weak market performance of books by first- and second-time writers of fiction and non-fiction, but at the same time it subsidises poetry and drama publishing regardless of the typically weak performance of these genres in the book market, thus helping to maintain established poets and dramatists in the field. Literature Fund subsidies, in other words, operate hand in glove with individual grants to consecrate and maintain certain writers and their works in the literary field. Grants and subsidies define what sorts of cultural agents and products count in the literary field and, in so doing, help to construct and maintain the sorts of agents and products that typify this field and differentiate it from other fields in the wider field of cultural production.

What this means is that the Australia Council, as one set of institutional practices among many, helps to maintain the boundary between, for example, the literary fiction of the literary field and the romantic and crime fiction of the wider cultural field, whose practitioners 'are not eligible to submit an application' because romantic and crime fiction products 'are not seen as high priorities by the Literature Fund.' Put simply, by differentiating literary practitioners from those others who need not apply, the Literature Fund helps to construct the categories of 'high brow' writing and writers and their other, 'popular' writing and writers.

This is not to say that the function of the Australia Council is a simple gate-keeping one because the practices of the Australia Council (and those agents who operate within it, who are funded by it or who stand outside it) significantly influence and at the same time are significantly influenced by every other interested agent in the field. The pressures of such interested agents are deeply sedimented in the cultural field – in what Margaret Archer called the cultural system – as well as being evident in the habitual socio-cultural practices by which

those agents operate.<sup>10</sup> Suppose, for example, that a writer succeeds in applying for an Australia Council grant or fellowship (having avoided genres like romantic or crime fiction, or instruction manuals, how-to books, and so on). Her funding success reinforces her own understanding of what counts as writing of 'literary merit' for the Australia Council, but it also reinforces a similar understanding for all those other agents involved in the grants process, including the selection panel and all other applicants. Suppose, further, that my application for Australia Council funding is rejected and I choose to challenge the judgement of the committee. I might do this by communicating with Australia Council Literary Fund administrators, possibly arguing my case in terms of the literary merit of my sample work and proposal. I might take my grievance to my local House of Representatives member or to the Minister for the Arts, possibly arguing my case on the grounds of regional representation. I might write publicly, by means of a letter to the major daily newspapers or literary specialist publications like the *Australian Book Review*, possibly arguing my case in terms of the dubious criteria by which applications are assessed. Whatever approach I take, my action exerts pressure on the Australia Council and those agents with an interest in it. How much pressure, of course, depends on who I am: Les Murray in dispute with the Australia Council is likely to exert more pressure than me.

While minnows may produce little pressure on the institution, evidence of successful interventions by bigger fish can be seen deeply-sedimented in the sort of restrictions I have described above. The fact that Australia Council criteria rule out romantic and crime fiction, military studies, instruction manuals, and so on, or restrict applicants on the basis of six published short stories, or twenty published poems of reasonable length, and so on, mark previous funding disputes like scars where pressure was brought to bear against the selection committee of the Literature Fund. There are two interesting features about this process. One is that the documentation of criteria by the Australia Council suppresses the contingent and oppositional background of the very disputes which generated the criteria in the first place by presenting the criteria in apparently objective terms – not romantic and

crime fiction, military studies, instruction manuals, or whatever – so that the scars appear to be benchmarks, merely neutral measurements. The other is that embedded in the apparently objective criteria are qualifiers like ‘substantial,’ ‘reasonable-length’ and ‘full-length’ which provide the selection committee with just enough discriminatory leeway to allow for a practically workable selection process as well as room for ambiguity in case of appeals.

The Australia Council, as a cultural system, then, responds to and shapes the socio-cultural practices and positions of those agents who operate within it, against it and despite it. This relation can be observed in terms of current practices and positions as they influence and are influenced by previous practices and positions. This tends to make the practices and positions of the Australia Council look like the product only of low-level squabbles between writers and committee members. But the relation can be observed more widely and deeply in terms of interventions in Australia Council activity by agents outside the literary field itself, most powerfully by agents from the political field. The fact that the Australia Council is a Commonwealth government-funded agency, as was its progenitor, Menzies’s Commonwealth Literary Fund, indicates exactly this kind of political intervention in the powerful ideologies underpinning Australia Council patronage of an ‘Australian literature,’ whatever that might be and whatever might be the interests of booksellers, publishers or readers outside the political field. Government patronage pursues, through Australia Council practices, projects ranging from the expression of a national identity to the valorising of multiculturalism. Recent reductions in the Australia Council Literature Fund budget indicate, further, how government policy shapes the literary field. Since 1993 the Literature Fund has dealt with periodic budget cuts – cuts determined by economic recession and the politics of economic rationalism – in several ways. First and most obviously, eligibility criteria have been tightened, restricting the number of applications for funding. This reduces the number of applicants hoping for a slice of the Literature Fund cake and makes the selection committee’s task of sorting the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ piles a little easier, but it doesn’t solve the fundamental problem of determining *which* applications go into the

'Yes' and 'No' piles. Restricting genres goes some way towards doing this, but the effective, and of course least advisable, way is to specify what counts as 'literary merit.' The Literature Fund has not taken this course for good strategic reasons – mainly because more apparently objective criteria tend to demand greater accountability, requiring the Fund to devote more resources to defending its funding judgements. Reducing the number of eligible applications does, however, have the effect of changing the shape of the literary field, most obviously by reducing the number of agents who are thought to be *bona fide* members of the field – agents who have written and published six short stories, or twenty poems, and so on – but also by positioning agents who need not apply as mere aspirants in the field.

The Literature Fund has responded to recent Commonwealth government budgetary pressure by constructing a new and complex application system whereby applicants are required to elect the funding category for which they wish to apply. This means that applicants are free to apply for a senior or A category grant, a junior or B category grant, or a Writers' Project grant for \$15 000, \$10 000 or \$5 000, subject to the same eligibility guidelines as operated in 1997, outlined above. So an applicant who in 1995 applied automatically for a B category grant now makes her best guess as to her chances, possibly applying for a Writers' Project grant for which she was, in 1995, 'over qualified.' The effect of government policy here is that the big fish are, in effect, feeding down the food chain.<sup>11</sup> The elegance of the Literature Fund's solution is that it obviates the need for the selection committee to specify criteria of 'literary merit' and makes it easier to defend funding judgements because those judgements should, on the whole, reflect the changed make up of the list of applicants. Another new strategy, the mentor program for sponsoring young writers, similarly restricts membership in the literary field by withholding direct funding to new writers, tying funding to already established writers (Davis, *Gangland*, 134-35). Whatever were the intentions of the architects, the program is a form of conservative apprenticeship that serves to maintain the power and incumbency in the field of those established writers judged to be suitable mentors. However necessary it might be for the Australia Council to respond to budgetary constraint in such ways, the effect – in

so far as the Australia Council determines positions and practices in the literary field – is to restrict the personnel and positions and kinds of texts and activities that prevail in the field.

I have attempted in the previous chapters in Part Two to show how various texts like anthologies, reference guides and study guides – produced most often by literary critics and consumed most often by students in the academic field – operate to construct and consecrate particular writers and their texts as literary ones. Writers and texts, of course, exist prior to this process. How they are generated in the first place depends on organised practices like those of the Literature Fund. Other organised practices also contribute to the process of constructing, maintaining and further promoting the kinds of personnel and texts which make up the literary field. Writers' festivals, in promoting particular genres and kinds of writer, are a key moment in this process. The 1997 Melbourne Writers' Festival is a particularly interesting case in point.

Unlike Helen Daniel's 'readerly dream, now become literary reality in [her anthology] *Expressway*,' the Melbourne Writers' Festival cannot be seen as 'an orderly gathering conducted in silence, in privacy, without consultation.'<sup>12</sup> Indeed, given the fact that festivals involve *public performance*, it is impossible to disguise the consultation and negotiation between a large number of agents that is necessary in order to create a program in the first place. Helen Daniel recognises this in the comments she makes about festivals in her editorial for the August 1997 *Australian Book Review*. She indicates here how the programming committee, with Daniel in the chair, must deal with the difficult task of producing a program in which '[t]he author' is selected according to her talent 'as performer, as promoter, as marketer, as festival panellist, as interviewee on radio and television – in short as public figure.'<sup>13</sup> The public nature of writers' festivals determines the selection of a kind of 'writer as performer, who will present well, speak well, perhaps provocatively but certainly in a lively way' (Daniel, 'Editorial,' *Australian Book Review*, [193] 1). The festival programming committee is consequently faced with a difficulty when it comes to the claim 'to showcase the art and talent of the writer' because, as Daniel puts it, 'there is ... an illogic in terms of the connection between success

and quality' (1). 'Success,' presumably, refers to sales success (1) while by 'quality' Daniel seems to refer to 'literary quality,' including 'the quality of the design, ... marketing strategies, ... the timbre of a voice[,] ... the prevailing literary fads' (1). Festivals, in other words, promote certain kinds of writer who have the capacity to be 'provocative' or 'lively,' while 'quality' is secondary. As a result, festivals assist in boosting the sales success, Daniel might add the status, of 'provocative' or 'lively' writers over 'more reticent or less self-assured' 'quality' writers' (1). This might suggest that festivals select writers on the basis of merit, however that merit might be defined. But festivals are, as Mark Davis notes, 'highly organised, hierarchical events, carefully designed to appear casual and democratic ... while the deeper networks of patronage stay well hidden' (Davis, *Gangland*, 116-17). While this is true, those networks are extremely difficult to pry apart in order to get beyond anecdotal evidence of mutual 'insider trading' by festival committee members, Literature Fund selection committee members, and so on (127).

Daniel's recognition that festivals promote certain kinds of 'literary writers,' namely literary writers who can be provocative or lively on stage, indicates how festivals operate like publishers, reviewers, literary critics, literary-prize juries, the Australia Council Literature Fund, and so on, as filters which select, promote and thereby canonise particular writers, apparently 'sifting the chaff from the wheat and making authoritative decisions about which deserve sponsorship for distribution and which are to be kept out of circulation.'<sup>14</sup> But there is more to the story than this, as I attempted to show in Chapter Three. Like publishers and the other 'gate-keepers' in the literary field, festival programming committees do not simply 'sift the chaff from the wheat' but decide what constitutes wheat and chaff in the first place. Each decision taken by these gatekeepers is a more or less habitually instituted step in constructing and reconstructing the general typical profile for a publishable literary manuscript (the wheat) and a rejected one (the chaff) and the appropriateness of potential future manuscripts in relation to this constructed profile.

While the 1997 Melbourne Writers' Festival promotes provocative or lively *writers* – a keynote address by Germaine Greer

sponsored by 'Melbourne's top rating radio station,' interviews with David Williamson and Louis Nowra, and so on – the program suggests that the criteria which guided the selection of *genres* are much wider.<sup>15</sup> The Festival includes sessions dealing with fantasy, crime and romance fiction, sports and song writing and film, as well as poetry, drama, fiction and autobiography (Melbourne Writers' Festival, Official Festival Program, 2). But the extent of this apparent breadth, it seems, remains 'literary.' The Melbourne Festival sessions deal with literary fantasy, literary crime, literary romance fiction, and so on, where 'literariness' is determined by the network of publishers sponsoring and launching their products at the Festival. Some Festival participants are sponsored by Penguin, HarperCollins, Hodder Headline, Pan Macmillan, University of Queensland Press, Lonely Planet, Random House, Allen and Unwin, ABC Books, Brandl and Schlesinger, Hyland House, Wakefield Press, Cambridge University Press and Paper Bark Press (4). Some sessions are sponsored by Penguin, Allen and Unwin, the Australian Film Institute and the *Age*. The festival is also an opportunity to launch new books, some published by the bigger houses – Penguin and Pan Macmillan – most by 'small' presses (2). Daniel's Festival program, more obviously than her anthology, *Expressway*, is determined by the interests of these other agents in the literary field for whom the festival is a vehicle for the promotion of a particular product – writers and their texts – before a predicted market of 'twenty-five thousand book lovers' (1).

Daniel's involvement in several ways in the organisations which select and promote particular writers, texts and genres – as a literary journalist and reviewer with the *Age*, as chair of the Melbourne Writers' Festival programming committee, as the editor of *Australian Book Review*, as the editor of *Expressway* – illustrates very clearly the degree to which all agents, operating with particular interests in the literary field and according to the institutions of the field, determine literary categories and the very writers and texts to be thought of and valued as literary ones in the field. But Daniel's role as an editor of anthologies and literary journals and as the chair of the Melbourne Writers' Festival programming committee indicates more than this. What is interesting about the institutional determination of literary writing and



which writers are the literary ones is that what counts in the literary field is determined by agents who more or less disguise their interests, usually under the camouflage of autonomy. Unlike the wider field of cultural production, in which agents generally admit to the conflicts, tensions and accidents which determine the production of cultural artefacts, the literary field, it would seem, is not the product of interested and competing agents operating according to institutionalised practices but is somehow independent of them, with a content that is supposed to be neutral. This can be seen, for example, in the way Helen Daniel describes the Melbourne Writers' Festival in her September editorial for *Australian Book Review*.

Ostensibly a discussion of 'the agonising choices ahead of [festival] audiences,' Daniel's editorial is, in fact, simply an advertisement for the 'agonising choices' available to those attending the Melbourne and Brisbane festivals.<sup>16</sup> While the sales pitch for her festival program is less than subtle – Daniel asserts, 'I haven't even mentioned' a variety of sessions which she goes on to mention in some detail – her editorial appears to function in a second and more elusive way (Daniel, 'Editorial,' *Australian Book Review*, [194] 1). In it she describes the Melbourne Writers' Festival as the festival that has 'influenced the way writers' festivals generally are conducted in this country. In that sense, the Melbourne Writers' Festival has played a crucial role in Australian literary and cultural life' (1). Daniel's case goes something like this: if '[w]riters' festivals are becoming increasingly important and popular in Australia' (1) and if all other writers' festivals are 'derivatives' (1) of the Melbourne Festival, then it is the Melbourne programming committee, with Daniel in the chair, that 'plays the crucial role in Australian literary and cultural life.' Whether festivals really are 'important' or 'popular,' whether Melbourne sets the pace or not, is less significant than the way Daniel submerges her own involvement with this 'crucial' Melbourne Writers' Festival.

By appearing only to describe the offerings of the Brisbane and Melbourne programming committees, Daniel is able to avoid implicating herself as a central agent in the institution. She becomes merely an observer. And when she finally does suggest some involvement with the Melbourne programming committee – admitting that it is 'we

[who] force readers to make choices' (1, emphasis added) – she immediately follows this admission with the argument that it is not the programming committee but individual readers who construct the festival because 'every reader must create his or her own program, mapping out for themselves [sic] the festival they want to attend' (1). In using this strategy Daniel attempts to disclaim any responsibility for the fact that it is her program, like her anthology, that constructs Australian literature. Her disclaimer here, attempting to suppress her own determining role in the literary field, should be a familiar one, a strategy that Daniel played out in her insistence in the introduction to *Expressway* back in 1989 that it is not the editor but 'the reader [who] make[s] choices and personally determine[s] the sequence' of stories, rather than 'simply accepting the sequence [of stories] on paper' (Daniel, *Expressway*, xiii).

The pains taken by agents in the literary field to pretend that the personnel in the field are disinterested and the texts are autonomous objects which are simply the best examples of literature seems to be an inheritance from the academic field. Since certain kinds of texts were appropriated for the purposes of literary criticism and the teaching and studying of literature, agents in the academic field have significantly determined the content of the literary field. The extent to which the academic field permeates the literary in this way can be seen, for example, in the way the Australia Council requests 'details of any publication (including anticipated awards, inclusion on educational curricula, etc, relating to work written with the assistance of [a] grant' and, it might be added, with the assistance of a subsidy.<sup>17</sup> What agents in the literary field recognise as 'wheat' is, it seems, the kind of 'wheat' that is the grist for the academic mill.

Despite the fact that agents in the literary field are self-interested and that the field is determined in interested ways, the myth of disinterestedness remains prevalent. Well-placed literary critical personnel like Helen Daniel or Brian Kiernan, whose *Most Beautiful Lies*, as I attempted to show in Chapter Five, successfully determined who were to count as the *Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers* in 1977, themselves suppress their interestedness as agents in the field. Even the Australia Council Literature Fund assessment procedure,

despite the fact that its judgements are obviously subjective and highly situated, maintains the autonomous myth, suggesting that it can guarantee that the process of selecting candidates for funding is neutral because 'the assessment of each grant program took considerable time and was undertaken in a very thorough and impartial manner' (*Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedures* – 1995, 4). But even here, because the Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee for 1995

consisted of 18 members appointed by the Australia Council and delegated by the Council (in accordance with S 7 (1) of the Australia Council Act) to make autonomous decisions on the applications received (1),

the 'autonomous decisions' of the committee *depend* on the statutory authority of the Council, that is, on an over-determining authority derived from the political field. This absurd notion that autonomy might be authorised, while it attempts to maintain the idea that the literary field is not over-determined, instead reveals precisely that over-determination.

Recent controversies over literary prizes and an accompanying scrutiny of literary juries in the popular press have made it difficult for anyone to pretend that literary prizes are impartial, simply recognising 'the best' in the literary field. Clearly, in awarding prizes juries are engaged in evaluating particular texts – however subjectively – in the literary field. But prizes are not simply a matter of conferring value on a text. In a very real sense prizes assist in the material construction of the text in the market place and in the making of valued texts, that is, in the construction of the literary field as a field which operates according to objective values. They are, in a very real sense, engaged in the process of value-adding.

Publishers generally promote books in two ways. Book reviewing promotes 'literary' books or, put another way, books selected for review are constructed as literary ones. Pre-publicity by way of advertising and 'author tours' or media interviews promotes 'popular' or 'blockbuster' books or, put another way, books selected for 'hard-sell' publicity campaigns are constructed as popular ones. At the same time, buyers of

literary texts typically respond to book reviews while buyers of popular ones ignore them. The same seems to be true of literary awards, perhaps because an award operates as a kind of review. The literary value-adding effect of awards can be traced particularly clearly, to take one example, in the sales performance of David Foster's *The Glade Within the Grove* in the 'literary best-seller' lists (an oxymoron of course). The fillip offered by the 1997 Miles Franklin award illustrates the degree to which the award continues to maintain its prestige – Andrew Riemer, for instance, calls it 'an award ... established to recognise solid literary achievement' and a 'prestigious distinction,' despite the fallout caused by Helen Demidenko/Darville's *The Hand That Signed the Paper* in 1995.<sup>18</sup> Literary prizes earmark certain books as suitable for consumption in the literary field. But beyond this they promote this literary consumption by making available to publishers, writers and so on a vehicle with which to publicise the text and the name of the writer. The interviews, re-releasing of titles, second reviews and further media discussion of the prize-winner assist in maintaining the prestige of the prize and also, importantly, in boosting sales. This is as true for one-year-old reds which win the Jimmy Watson trophy as it is for books which win the Miles Franklin prize, and the makers and marketers of both products use similar strategies to maximise sales. This includes, for example, repackaging or possibly reprinting the product (bottle label or dust jacket) with a gold medal and readvertising the product to announce its prize-winning credentials.

The effect of literary prizes on book sales is remarkably clear. Sales of *The Glade Within the Grove*, for example, jumped after the announcement on 3 June, 1997, that it had received the Miles Franklin award for a work of fiction. The previously unlisted novel became the highest selling title on the *Weekend Australian* best-seller list by 28-29 June.<sup>19</sup> The effect of prizes on sales success appears, however, to be short lived. *The Glade Within the Grove* dropped from the number one position to fourth on 9 August and seventh on 13 September before dropping from the list entirely by 23 September. The Miles Franklin, in this case, offers the writer and winning book decidedly short-term exposure. But it has a second and more durable effect in the literary

field because it foregrounds an evaluative regime operating in the literary field. *The Glade Within the Grove*, or any other literary prize-winner, maintains the appearance of a value structure which recognises 'quality' products, regardless of the overall sales performance of the book. This qualifying – constructing the literary field as a quality field – is maintained by the awarding of prizes regardless of the merits of a particular book or writer. In fact, debate over the decisions made by juries, like the debate over the Helen Demidenko/Darville Miles Franklin prize, serves only to reinforce the power of literary prizes as a way of maintaining the credentials of 'literary' products and the field in which they have value. The fact that the Miles Franklin jury is thought to have made the wrong decision over *The Hand That Signed the Paper* perpetuates the view that the literary field is one in which evaluative decisions about quality cultural products *can* be made – the jury could have 'got it right.'<sup>20</sup> It is because of the perception that literary prizes are supposed to be objective tests of quality or literary value (whether or not they really are) that the Miles Franklin has, so far, suffered little damage in the literary field. In fact, controversies over recent Miles Franklin judgements actually serve to reinforce the importance of the prize as an institution which maintains the regime of value – that there is 'good' writing to be included and 'bad' writing – romantic or crime fiction, perhaps – to be excluded from the literary field. The debate about mistakes in the judging process is about particular decisions and the make-up of the jury, not whether to judge in the first place. As a result, a series of similar 'mistakes' in Miles Franklin judging in the next decade might exert a modifying pressure on the category 'Australian literature,' but in doing so the Miles Franklin jury would simply change 'Australian literature,' not destroy it.

Describing 'hard' institutions like the Australia Council, literary prize juries or writers' festival programming as I have done here tends to suggest that these institutions of the cultural system *create* socio-cultural practices. But in fact they are as much produced by socio-cultural practices as they are the product of them. In other words, socio-cultural practices – those ways of thinking about and dealing with texts that are the product of notions such as the authoritative author, the text as an expression of a psychologically coherent individual, and so on –

are *solidified* in and by the judgements of institutions like the Australia Council, literary prize juries, or writers' festival programming. The problem is that, in describing such solidification, it seems as though these 'hard' institutions create socio-cultural practices when, in fact, they are always and at the same time product *and* producer of ways of thinking about and doing things with texts.

Perhaps the most solidified socio-cultural practices of 'the literary writer' might seem to be traceable to an Anglo-Saxon middle class social world view which Australian published writers characteristically share (see Davis, *Gangland*, 133). Evidence for this view can be found in the overwhelmingly professional and educated background from which most writers come and in which their writing activity originates. Professional and pedagogical institutions and practices, what Andrew Milner calls 'capitalist authorial relations of production,' are clearly discernible in the professional and educated background of the majority of literary writers.<sup>21</sup> But the diffused influence they exert on textual (re)production, the way they mediate between the agent and her textual activity, is not so easy to see. On the basis of fairly limited samples Milner demonstrates that the sorts of writers who are supported in a capitalist system – that is, a market system that functions in terms of royalties and state patronage – tend to have a professional and educated background (Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*, 110). In support of this, Milner compiles the most well-known and largest surveys of writers, by Raymond Williams and Richard Altick, to demonstrate that 'the great majority of nineteenth- and twentieth-century [English] writers were both middle class (83.9% for 1800-1835, 84.2% for 1900-1935) and university-educated (52.5% for 1880-1835, 72.3% for 1900-1935)' while the majority of Australian writers surveyed in 1983 were university educated (113-14) (see Appendix, Tables 3-6). But how this kind of background helps to construct particular kinds of writer and writing is difficult to trace. And Milner's conclusions about the class and educational background of literary writers need to be treated with caution, given that a pre-conceived notion of literariness is already built in to Williams's figures. The figures for Tables 5 and 6 are drawn, after all, from the *Oxford Introduction to English Literature*, by definition ignoring a range of 'non-canonical' writers who (and genres

which) may well exhibit quite different demographic characteristics. What is clear, however, is that the kind of literary writer who is recognised by literary academics tends to be produced out of professional and educated social groups. Even so, Milner's figures do not make it possible to explain exactly how the social and educational background that is typical for most writers determines the sorts of product writers are likely to believe to be worth writing, or what writers write or what eventually gets to be published. This is because any explanation depends in the end on an understanding of the 'soft' sorts of intricate social, institutional and specifically pedagogical influences that construct those cultural agents who (re)produce texts, on an understanding of the sorts of habitual socio-cultural practices that just seem to be obvious, natural, 'just the way we do things' in the cultural field. But it is fair to say, at least, that the sorts of professional and educational institutions that control ways of doing things with texts also control the textual activities of cultural producers in the literary field.

What I have been trying to show here is that the practices, personnel and texts that count in the literary field are the product of complex institutional relations, determined within the literary field as well as across other fields. My argument is that writing of any kind is mediated at every moment by a network of institutions, what Foucault called 'orders of discourse' or discourse formations, always embodied in the practices of agents in the cultural field. All the institutions that underlie the way 'the writer' is constructed and maintained, all the agents who determine, protect and promote the actual incumbent writers – the usual suspects – in the field, all the practices that underpin the way texts are written, selected, physically manifested and consecrated, advertised and sold, catalogued and loaned, taught, read and talked about produce and reproduce them as relatively stable and apparently objective items in the field. What we make of writers and texts is, in other words, always dependent on the institutions that and agents who determine our textual practices. This might suggest that social agents are always either corrupt conspirators who play the system or else only ghosts in the machine, subject to always-antecedent

institutions. But the cultural agent stands in a more complex relation to the institutions in the field than this. As I have tried to show, the institutions that determine practices of textual (re)production – writing, reading, cataloguing, and so on – are embodied in texts and the agents who use them. Agents inherit the institutions that determine consequent practices but they also maintain these institutions by use, so that practices also stabilise consequent institutions. This explains how it is that the field changes, however slowly, over time – how, for example, various writers and texts achieve or lose canonical status. Systematic institutions that determine the cultural practices of agents are themselves constantly maintained, challenged or modified by those practices.

In outlining a theory of cultural production and attempting to describe it by looking at the institutions and practices of cultural agents who, for example, make and use anthologies, reference guides or study guides it might appear in the end that I am attempting to reveal the process at it is, as though it is possible to destabilise texts and textual practices once and for all. But this is not so. All texts, including this one, continue to function according to the institutions and practices of the cultural field, making themselves always, if only apparently, objects in the field, whether we think about it or not.



- 
- <sup>1</sup> *Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedure* – 1994, 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Mark Davis, *Gangland: Cultural Elites and the New Generationalism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997, 117.
- <sup>3</sup> Not by accident, the categories listed here are based on terms used by the Australia Council Literature Fund.
- <sup>4</sup> On disinterestedness in the cultural field see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993, 75 and especially 154 where he describes the inverted rule in the field by which the 'loser takes all.'
- <sup>5</sup> See *Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Assessment Committee Assessment Procedures* – 1994, 3 and 1995, 11. In 1995 the Literature Board of the Australia Council was replaced by the Australia Council Literature Fund. I refer to the pre- and post-1995 structure as the Literature Fund.
- <sup>6</sup> See Margaret S. Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988 and Chapter One, 44-7, above for a discussion of the cultural system and socio-cultural practices.
- <sup>7</sup> See above, 67-71.
- <sup>8</sup> *Australia Council Literature Fund, Individual Writers' Grants Conditions for Application* - 1995, 4.
- <sup>9</sup> *Australia Council Grants Handbook* - 1997, 71.
- <sup>10</sup> See Chapter One, 46.
- <sup>11</sup> The effect, as Mark Davis notes, is that older writers – 'the Whitlam generation' – eat ninety per cent of the grants budget, while writers under thirty receive less than ten per cent. See Davis, *Gangland*, 133.
- <sup>12</sup> Helen Daniel, ed. *Expressway: Invitation stories by Australian writers from a painting by Jeffrey Smart*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1989, ix.
- <sup>13</sup> Helen Daniel, 'Editorial,' *Australian Book Review*, 193 (August, 1997), 1.
- <sup>14</sup> Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin and Walter W. Powell, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing*. New York: Basic Books, 1982, 4. For a discussion of the perspective on gatekeeping offered by Coser, Kadushin and Powell see Chapter Three.
- <sup>15</sup> Melbourne Writers' Festival, Official Festival Program, the Age, 30 August 1997, 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Helen Daniel, 'Editorial,' *Australian Book Review*, 194 (September, 1997), 1.
- <sup>17</sup> *Australia Council Literature Fund, Artistic Report - Fellowship or Writer's Project Grant* - 1994, 2, emphasis added.
- <sup>18</sup> Andrew Riemer, *The Demidenko Debate*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996, 138-39.
- <sup>19</sup> The *Weekend Australian* best-seller list is compiled by Gleebooks (Sydney) and Readings (Melbourne) bookshops.
- <sup>20</sup> Of course, how often the Miles Franklin jury can 'get it wrong' remains to be seen. It seems to have weathered the 1994 exclusion of works by Elizabeth Jolley, Maurila Meehan and Frank Moorhouse and the 1995 Demidenko/Darville storm. See Andrew Riemer, *The Demidenko Debate*, 135-36 for a discussion of the 1994 and 1995 decisions.
- <sup>21</sup> Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 104-09.

**Table 3**  
**Social origin of British writers according to class (1800-1935)**

Class (father's occupation)	Period (according to the date when writers begin to produce their significant work)			
	1800-1835	1835-1870	1870-1900	1900-1935
Upper class (nobility, gentry)	26	26	13	24
Upper middle class (bankers, merchants, etc.)	36	25	20	10
Middle middle class (arts and professions)	74	128	83	137
Other	34	32	27	49
Lower middle class (tradesmen, artisans, etc.)	28	18	18	6
Total middle class*	198	229	161	226
Labourers	7	2	3	14
Total	205	231	164	240

\*totals have been corrected

Source: R. D. Altick, 'The sociology of authorship,' in *Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication*, ed. P. Davison. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1978, 51-52, reprinted in Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 113.

**Table 4**  
**Educational backgrounds of British writers (1880-1935)**

Educational background	Period (according to the date when writers begin to produce their significant work)			
	188-35	1835-70	1870-1900	1900-35
Little or no schooling	20	13	7	19
Education ended at secondary level	64	62	43	54
University or comparable institution	93	147	122	191
Total	177	222	172	264

Source: R. D. Altick, 'The sociology of authorship,' in *Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication*, ed. P. Davison. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1978, 51-52, reprinted in Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 114.

**Table 5.**  
**Social origin of English writers (1480-1930)\***

Social origin	Period (assigned on the basis of the tenth year after the particular writer's birth)								
	1480-1530	1530-80	1580-1630	1630-80	1680-1730	1730-80	1780-1830	1830-80	1880-1930
Nobility	3	3	0	2	2†	2	1	0	1
Gentry	8	12	9	7		0	8	7	7
Professional	4	9	13	7	13	11	25	31	30
Merchants	0	4	1	0	1	1	9	6	2
Tradesmen	0	3	4	3	2	4	5	9‡	5
Craftsmen	1	5	1	2	1	3	5		4
Farmers	2	0	2	0	0	4	2	0	2
Labourers	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Uncertain	3	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	21	38	33	22	19	25	57	53	53

\*social origin determined by father's occupation

†figure applies to nobility and gentry

‡figure applies to tradesmen and craftsmen

Source: Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, 255-63, tabulated by Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 111.

**Table 6**  
**Educational background of English writers (1480-1930)**

Educational background	Period (assigned on the basis of the tenth year after the writer's birth)								
	1480-1530	1530-80	1580-1630	1630-80	1680-1730	1730-80	1780-1830	1830-80	1880-1930
National grammar schools	4	8	12	6	6	4	18	19	32
Local grammar schools	5	9	9	7	9	8	14	16	8
Scottish/Irish local schools	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	7	0
Private schools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Elementary schools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Dissenting academies	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Home or private tuition	5	2	3	4	2	3	16	7	4
Uncertain	7	19	9	4	2	5	5	2	3
Oxford/Cambridge	17	27	28	13	8	8	24	24	32
Other university	2	2	0	4	0	4	9	15	5
No university or uncertain	2	9	5	5	11	13	24	14	16
Total	21	38	33	22	19	25	57	53	53

Source: Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, 255-63, tabulated by Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996, 112.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ACKLAND, Michael, ed. *The Penguin Book of 19th Century Australian Literature*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1993.
- ADORNO, Theodor W. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed. J.M. Bernstein. London: Routledge, 1991.
- ALTHUSSER, Louis. *For Marx*. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Random House, 1970.
- . *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. London: New Left Books, 1971.
- and E. Balibar. *Reading Capital*. Trans. Ben Brewster. London: New Left Books, 1970.
- ALTIERI, Charles. 'An Idea and Ideal of a Literary Canon.' *Critical Inquiry*. 10 (1983): 37-60.
- ANDERSON, Don. 'The Revenge of Narrative?' *Australian Book Review*. 176 (1995): 48-9.
- ANDERSON, Peter. 'Questioning the Cultural Hierarchy.' *Eyeline*. 22/23 (1993): 4-5.
- ARCHER, M.S. *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.
- ARMSTRONG, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- AUSTIN, John L. *How To Do Things With Words*. Eds J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- BAIL, Murray, ed. *The Faber Book of Contemporary Australian Short Stories*. London: Faber, 1988.
- BAUMAN, Richard and Joel Sterzer, eds *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- BARTHES, Roland. *Barthes: Selected Writings*. Ed. Susan Sontag. London: Fontana, 1983.
- . *Image, Music, Text*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- . *S/Z*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1975.

- BAUDRILLARD, Jean. *The Mirror of Production*. Trans. Mark Poster. St. Louis: Telos, 1974.
- BECKER, Howard. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1982.
- BENNETT, Tony. *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*. London: Batsford, 1981.
- . *Formalism and Marxism*. London: Methuen, 1979.
- . *Outside Literature*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- , ed. *Popular Culture, Past and Present: A Reader*. London: Croom Helm, 1982.
- , ed. *Popular Fiction, Technology, Ideology, Production, Reading*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- , 'Texts in history: The Determinations of Readings and Their Texts.' *Journal of the Midwestern Modern Language Association*. 18.1 (1985): 1-16.
- , Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott, eds *Popular Culture and Social Relations*. Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1986.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. 'The Author as Producer.' *Understanding Brecht*. Trans. Anna Bostock. London: New Left Books, 1977.
- , 'Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' Rosalind E. Krauss. 'The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths' in *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge: MIT, 1986.
- BERMAN, Russel A., 'Writing for the Book Industry: The Writer in Organised Capitalism.' *Modern Culture and Critical Theory*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989. 54-69.
- BHABA, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, 1994.
- BIRIOTTI, Maurice and Nicola Miller, eds *What is an Author?* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.
- BLANCHOT, Maurice, 'Everyday Speech.' *Yale French Studies: Everyday Life*. 73 (1987): 12-20.
- BORCHARDT, D. H. and W. Kirsop, eds *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History*. Melbourne: Australian Reference Publications, 1988.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Routledge, 1984.
- and Luc Boltanski, 'Formal Qualifications and Occupational Hierarchies: The Relationship Between the Production System and the Reproduction System.' Edmund J. King, ed. *Reorganising Education: Management and Participation for Change*. London: Sage, 1977, 60-9.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Trans. Matthew Adamson. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Polity, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Sage, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Structures, Habitus and Practices,' from *The Logic of Practice*, in Anthony Giddens, David Held, Don Hubert, Debbie Seymour, John Thompson, eds *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993.
- BOYARIN, Jonathan, ed. *The Ethnography of Reading*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.
- BRETT, Judith, 'Cultural Politics and Australian Literary Magazines.' *Meanjin*. 43.3 (1984): 423-28.
- BROOKS, Cleanth and Robert Penn Warren, eds *Understanding Fiction*. New York: Crofts, 1943.
- BROPHY, Kevin. *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing*. Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1998.
- BÜRGER, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- BURGIN, Victor. *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity*. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- BURNS, Connie, ed. *Feeling Restless: Australian Women's Short Stories, 1940-1969*. Sydney: Collins, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Marygai McNamara, eds *Eclipsed: Two Centuries of Australian Women's Fiction*. Sydney: Collins, 1988.
- CALHOUN, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, eds *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity, 1993.
- CANTRELL, L., ed. *Writings of the 1890s: Short Stories, Verse and Essays*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1981.
- CATALANO, Gary. 'The Need for Taste.' *Island*. 27 (1986): 32.
- CLIFFORD, James and George Marcus, eds *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.
- COLLINS, Richard, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Paddy Scannell, Philip Schlesinger and Colin Sparkes, eds *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*. London: Sage, 1986.

- CONNEL, R.W. *Which Way is Up? Essays on Class, Sex and Culture*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983.
- CONNOR, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theory and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992.
- COSER, Lewis, C. Kadushin and W. Powell. *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing*. New York: Basic, 1982.
- COUANI, Anna and Sneja Gunew, eds *Telling Ways: Australian Women's Experimental Writing*. Melbourne: Australian Feminist Studies, 1988.
- CRANE, Diana. *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World 1940-1985*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.
- CRIMP, Douglas, 'On the museum's ruins.' H. Foster, ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Port Townsend: Bay, 1983.
- CULLER, Jonathan. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge, 1975.
- CUNNINGHAM, Stuart and Graeme Turner, eds *The Media in Australia: Industries, Texts, Audiences*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993.
- DANIEL, Helen, ed. *Expressway*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1989.
- DAVIS, Beatrice, ed. *Short Stories of Australia: The Moderns*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1967.
- DAVIS, Lennard. *Resisting Novels*. London: Methuen, 1987.
- DAVIS, Mark. *Gangland: Cultural Elites and the New Generationalism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997.
- DE CERTEAU, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.
- DE GRAZIA, Margreta. *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authority and the 1790 Apparatus*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.
- DICKIE, George. *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art*. New York: Haven, 1984.
- DISHER, Gary, ed. *Personal Best: Thirty Australian authors choose their best short stories*. Sydney: Collins, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Personal Best 2: Stories and Statements by Australian Writers*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1991.
- DOCHERTY, Thomas. *Postmodernism: A Reader*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.



- DOCKER, John. *In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1984.
- DURING, Simon, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- DUTTON, Geoffrey, ed. *The Illustrated Treasury of Australian Stories*. Melbourne: Nelson, 1976.
- EAGLETON, Terry. *The Function of Criticism*. London: Verso, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983 [Blackwell, 1996].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- EASTHOPE, Antony. *Literary into Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Kate McGowan, eds *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992.
- EATON, Marcia M. *Basic Issues in Aesthetics*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1988.
- FALKINER, Suzanne, ed. *Room to Move: The Redress Press Anthology of Australian Women's Short Stories*. Sydney: Unwin, 1985.
- FEATHER, John, 'From Rights in Copies to Copyright: the recognition of Authors' Rights in English Law and Practice in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.' *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal*. 10 (1992): 445-73.
- FISH, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980.
- FISKE, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- FOSTER, Arnold W. and J. Blau, eds *Art and Society: Readings in the Sociology of the Arts*. Albany: AUNYP, 1989.
- FOUCAULT, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Orders of Discourse.' See Lash below.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'What is An Author?' See, alternatively, Bouchard above, or Harari below.
- FOWLER, Alistair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.
- FREADMAN, Anne, 'Anyone For Tennis?' See Freedman and Medway below.

- FREEDMAN, Aviva and Peter Medway, eds *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994.
- FRITH, Simon, 'The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent: defending popular from the populists.' *Diacritics*. 21.4 (1991): 102-15.
- FROW, John and Meaghan Morris, eds *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993.
- FROW, John. *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Marxism and Literary History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Social Production of Knowledge and the Discipline of English*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1990.
- GADAMER, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Seabury, 1975.
- GARFINKEL, H. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984.
- GIBBS, Anna and Alison Tilson, eds *Frictions: An Anthology of Fiction by Women*. Melbourne: Sybylla, 1982.
- GIDDENS, Anthony, David Held, Don Hubert, Debbie Seymour and John Thompson, eds *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Jonathan H. Turner, eds *Social Theory Today*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984.
- GOLDING, Alan. *From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry*. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1995.
- GOLDSWORTHY, Kerry, ed. *Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Dent, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Coast to Coast: Recent Prose Writing*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1986.
- GOODALL, Peter. *High Culture, Popular Culture: The Long Debate*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995.
- GROSSBERG, Lawrence, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, eds *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- GUBAR, Susan and Jonathan Kamholtz, eds *English Inside and Out: The Places of Literary Criticism*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- GULDBERG, Hans. *Books: Who Reads Them?* Sydney: Australia Council, 1990.
- GUNEW, Sneja and Anna Yeatman, eds *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993.

- GUILLORY, John. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- , 'The Ideology of Canon-Formation: T. S. Eliot and Cleanth Brooks.' *Critical Inquiry*. 10 (1983): 173-98.
- HADGRAFT, Cecil and Richard Wilson, eds *A Century of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1963.
- HALLIGAN, Marion. 'Women's Short Fiction.' *Island*. 27 (1986): 62-3.
- HARARI, Josué V., ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*. London: Methuen, 1980.
- HARVEY, David. *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- HAWKINS, Harriet. *Classics and Trash: Traditions and Taboos in High Art and Popular Modern Genres*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990.
- HEATH, Shirley. *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- HERGENHAN, Laurie, ed. *The Australian Short Story: A Collection, 1890s-1990s*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1986.
- , ed. *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988.
- HERITAGE, John. *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984.
- HESELTINE, Harry, ed. *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1976.
- HINMAN, Charles, ed. *The Norton Facsimile: First Folio of Shakespeare*. New York: Norton, 1968.
- HIRSCH, Paul M. 'Production and distribution roles among cultural organisations: On the division of labour across intellectual disciplines.' *Social Research*. 45.2 (1978): 315-30.
- HUME, David. *Of the Standard of Taste*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.
- HUNTER, Ian. *Culture and Government: The Emergence of Literary Education*. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- , 'Setting Limits to Culture.' *New Formations*. 4 (1988): 102-23.
- HUYSEN, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1986.
- INDYK, Ivor. *David Malouf*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1993.
- JAMESON, Fredric, 'Postmodernism and consumer society.' Hal Foster, ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Port Townsend: Bay, 1983.

- JENKINS, Richard. *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- JEFFERSON, Ann and David Robey. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. London: Batsford, 1982.
- KIERNAN, Brian, ed. *The Most Beautiful Lies: A Collection of Stories by Five Major Contemporary Fiction Writers: Bail, Carey, Lurie, Moorhouse and Wilding*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1977.
- KRAMER, Leonie, ed. *My Country: Australian Poetry and Short Stories: Two Hundred Years. (I) Beginnings - 1930s, and (II) 1930s-1980s*. Sydney: Lansdowne, 1985.
- , ed. *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1981.
- LASH, Scott. *Sociology of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- , ed. *Post-Structuralist and Post-Modernist Sociology*. London: Elgar, 1991.
- LAVERS, Annette. *Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After*. London: Methuen, 1982.
- LAWSON, Alan, ed. *Patrick White: Selected Writings*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1994.
- LEE, Jenny, Philip Mead and Gerald Murnane, eds *The Temperament of Generations: Fifty years of Writing in Meanjin*. Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1990.
- LORD, Mary, ed. *The Penguin Best Australian Short Stories*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1991.
- LOTMAN, Jurij. *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. Trans. Gail Lenhoff and Ronald Vroon. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1977.
- LUNSFORD, Andrea and Lisa Ede, 'Collaborative Authorship and the Teaching of Writing,' Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.
- LYONS, Martyn, 'Texts, Books, Readers: Which Kind of Cultural History?' *Australian Cultural History*. 11 (1992): 1-15.
- LYOTARD, Jean. *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- MACHEREY, Pierre. *A Theory of Literary Production*. London: Routledge, 1978.
- MACLAREN, J. *Australian Literature: An Historical Introduction*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1989.
- MACLEOD, Jock and Pat Buckridge, eds *Books and Reading in Australian Society*. Brisbane: Institute for Cultural Policy Studies – Griffith University, 1992.

- MAHAR, Alan and John Powers, eds *Prose Writing for Australians: An Anthology of Feature Articles and Short Stories*. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1985.
- MALOUF, David, 'A First Place: the Mapping of a World,' *Southerly*. 45 (1985): 3-10
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'First Experiences and First Places,' *Alumni News*. 16.2 (1984): 4-7.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'From a Great Cultural Centre,' *Age Saturday Extra* (14 July 1984): 14.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Johnno, short stories, poems, essays and interview*. Edited James Tulip. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Putting Ourselves on the Map,' *Age Bicentennial Extra* (23 January 1988): 1-2.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Johnno Blueprint,' *Weekend Australian Review* (29-30 August 1998): 10-12.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Three Talks: David Malouf, Les Murray and David Rowbotham,' *Australian Literary Studies*. 11 (1984): 316-20.
- MANDELBAUM, Maurice, 'Family Resemblances and Generalisation Concerning the Arts.' Morris Weitz, ed. *Problems in Aesthetics: An Introductory Book of Readings*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- MEAD, Philip and Marion Campbell, eds *Shakespeare's Books: Contemporary Cultural Politics and the Persistence of Empire*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Literary and Cultural Studies – University of Melbourne, 1993.
- MILLER, Carolyn, 'Genre as Social Action.' See Freedman and Medway above.
- MILNER, Andrew. *Literature, Culture and Society*. London: UCLP, 1996.
- MOORHOUSE, Frank, ed. *The Mood of Contemporary Australia in Short Stories: The State of the Art*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1983.
- MORRIS, Meaghan. *The Pirate's Fiancee: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism*. London: Verso, 1988.
- MORLEY, David. *The 'Nationwide' Audience*. London: British Film Institute, 1980.
- NEILSEN, Philip. *Imagined Lives: A Study of David Malouf*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1990.
- NELSON, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg, eds *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1988.
- NESBIT, Molly, 'What Was an Author?' *Yale French Studies: Everyday Life*. 73 (1987): 229-57.
- OHMAN, Richard, 'The Shaping of a Canon: U.S. Fiction, 1960-1975.' *Critical Inquiry*. 10 (1983): 199-223.

- OWEN, Peter. *Publishing Now: the Definitive Assessment by Key People in the Book Trade*. London: Peter Owen, 1993.
- PALGRAVE, Francis, ed. *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1861. See also Edward Leeson, ed. *The New Golden Treasury of English Verse*. London: Macmillan, 1980.
- PORTER, Carolyn, 'History and literature: After the new historicism.' *New Literary History*. 21.2 (1990): 253-72.
- PRATT, Mary L. *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977.
- QUILLER-COUCH, Arthur, ed. *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1900.
- RABINOW, P., ed. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- RADWAY, Janice, 'Reading is not eating: Mass produced literature and the theoretical, methodological and political consequences of a metaphor.' *Book Research Quarterly*. 2 (1986): 7-29.
- . *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984.
- . 'The Book-of-the-Month Club and the General Reader: On the uses of 'serious' fiction.' *Critical Inquiry*. 14 (1988): 516-38.
- . 'The scandal of the middlebrow: The Book-of-the-Month Club, class fracture, and cultural authority.' *South Atlantic Quarterly*. (1990): 703-37.
- RIEMER, Andrew. *The Demidenko Debate*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996.
- RIKARD-BELL, Belinda, ed. *The Largest Island: Modern Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Flinders, 1989.
- ROBBINS, Derek. *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu: Recognising Society*. Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1991.
- RODDEN, John. *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.
- RORTY, Richard, 'Solidarity or Objectivity.' *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers, 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991, 21-34.
- . *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979.
- ROSE, Mark. *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Harvard: Harvard UP, 1993.
- RUBIN, Joan S., 'Self, culture, and self-culture in modern America: The early history of the Book-of-the-Month Club.' *The Journal of American History*. 71 (1985): 782-806.

- SAID, Edward. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.
- SAUNDERS, David. *Authorship and Copyright*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- SCOTT, Bill, ed. *Impressions on a Continent: A Collection of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1983.
- SEARLE, John R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969.
- SERLE, G. *The Creative Spirit in Australia: A Cultural History*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1987.
- SHAPCOTT, Thomas. *The Literature Board: A Brief History*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1988.
- SMITH, Barbara Hernstein. *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Contingencies of Value.' *Critical Inquiry*. 10 (1983): 1-35.
- SPENDER, Dale, ed. *The Penguin Anthology of Women's Writing*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Heroines: A Contemporary Anthology of Australian Women Writers*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1991.
- SPENDER, Lynne, ed. *Her Selection: Writings by Nineteenth-Century Australian Women*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988.
- TAYLOR, Charles, 'To Follow a Rule.' See Calhoun, Li Puma and Postone, above.
- TAYLOR, Gary. *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present*. London: Vintage, 1990.
- TORRE, Stephen. *The Australian Short Story 1940-1980: A Bibliography*. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984.
- TRIBE, K.W., 'Government Support for the Arts - Practices, Principles and Proposals.' *Australian Cultural Studies*. 7 (1988): 19-36.
- TURNER, Graeme, ed. *Nation Culture Text: Australian Cultural and Media Studies*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *National Fictions: Literature, Film, and the Construction of Australian Narrative*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Making It National: Nationalism and Australian Popular Culture*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994.
- VEESER, H. A., ed. *The New Historicism*. London: Routledge, 1989.

- VOLOSINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1973.
- WALTER, J. *Australian Studies: A Survey*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1989.
- WARK, McKenzie, 'After Literature: Culture, Policy, Theory and Beyond.' *Meanjin*. 51.4 (1992): 677-90.
- WEBBY, Elizabeth and Lydia Weavers, eds *Goodbye to Romance: Stories by Australian and New Zealand Women, 1930s to 1980s*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1989.
- WEITZ, Morris, ed. *Problems in Aesthetics: An Introductory Book of Readings*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- WHITLOCK, Gillian, ed. *Eight Voices of the Eighties: Stories, Journalism and Criticism by Australian Women Writers*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1989.
- WIEAND, Jeffrey, 'Can There Be an Institutional Theory of Art?' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 39 (1981): 409-17.
- WILDE, W. H., Joy Hooton and Barry Andrews, eds *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1985.
- WILDING, Michael, ed. *The Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Tabloid Story Pocket Book*. Sydney: Wild and Wooley, 1978.
- WILLIAMS, Raymond. *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell*. London: Hogarth, 1958 [1987].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Keywords*. London: Fontana, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Culture*. London: Fontana, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. London: Verso, 1989.
- WOODMANSEE, Martha, 'On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity.' *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal*. 10 (1992): 279-92.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Genius and the Copyright: economic and legal conditions of the emergence of the "Author."' *Eighteenth Century Studies*. 17 (1984): 425-48.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Peter Jaszi, eds *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- WOOLFE, Sue and Kate Grenville, eds *Making Stories: How Ten Australian Novels Were Written*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993.



YOUNG, Edward. *Conjectures on Original Composition*. Leeds: Scolar, 1966.

YOUNG, Robert J. C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*.  
London: Routledge, 1995.